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ABSTRACT

This publication presents the proceedings of a conference that brought together local leaders who are working for change in distressed communities in 16 cities. An overview discusses the background for the conference and describes common themes that emerged during its proceedings. The next section contains the keynote address, "Race, Class, and Poverty in Urban America: A Comparative Perspective" (William J. Wilson). Another section offers summaries of six conference sessions on the following topics: (1) neighborhoods as entry points for change; (2) the implications of an asset orientation for urban change strategies; (3) structuring effective community services; (4) dealing with race and ethnicity in urban change strategies; (5) moving toward community-responsive schools; and (6) a dialogue with the sponsoring foundations. A final section contains the following five conference papers, which were the basis for the sessions: (1) "Neighborhoods as an Entry Point for Change" (Ronald Shiffman); (2) "The Implications of an Asset Orientation for Urban Change Strategies" (Blandina C. Ramirez); (3) "Structuring Effective Community Services" (Audrey Rowe); (4) "Dealing with Race and Ethnicity in Urban Change Strategies" (Peter B. Edelman); and (5) "Toward Community-Responsive Schools" (Ralph R. Smith and Michelle Fine). Includes a listing of conference participants and their affiliations. (JB)

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Conference Report

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Building Strong Communities

Strategies for Urban Change

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Conference Report

Building Strong Communities

Strategies for Urban Change

May 13–15, 1992
Cleveland, Ohio

Sponsored by
the Annie E. Casey, Ford,
and Rockefeller Foundations

Acknowledgements

The conference was jointly planned by a committee representing the Neighborhood Family Initiative, the New Futures Initiative, the Casey Child Welfare Reform Initiative, and the Community Planning and Action Project, and their sponsoring foundations, the Ford, Rockefeller, and Annie E. Casey Foundations: Angela Glover Blackwell, Executive Director, Urban Strategies Council • Don Crary, Executive Director, New Futures for Little Rock Youth • Otis Johnson, Executive Director, Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority • Ralph Knighton, Executive Director, North Hartford Development Corporation • Susan Motley, Director, Neighborhood and Family Initiative, Center for Community Change • Arthur J. Naparstek, Director, Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty • Ron Register, Project Director, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis • Prue Brown, Deputy Director, Urban Poverty Program, The Ford Foundation • Cheryl Casciani, Planning Associate, The Annie E. Casey Foundation • James O. Gibson, Director, Equal Opportunity Program, The Rockefeller Foundation • Aida Rodriguez, Associate Director, Equal Opportunity Program, The Rockefeller Foundation.

Ann Rosewater brokered the discussion among the philanthropic actors and facilitated the planning process. Sheri Dunn Berry and Gloria Kennard of the Urban Strategies Council provided logistical support. Sheri Dunn Berry and Robin Broder of the American Writing Corporation provided summaries of the conference sessions. The American Writing Corporation produced the conference proceedings. Gloria Kennard provided conference photos. The cover photo and cover page photos are by Nita Winter.

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Overview

Overview

Ann Rosewater, Facilitator

For many years a host of quiet pioneers have been formulating strategies and working for real change in distressed communities across America. Many of their efforts have run counter to prevailing policy and practice, but their continuing commitment puts them in the vanguard of a new dedication to confront poverty. Seeded by national philanthropy—The Ford, Annie E. Casey, and Rockefeller Foundations—local leaders have come together in many cities to examine local needs and resources, identify opportunities for change, and pursue specific strategies to stimulate and secure vital and productive communities. Their efforts have been intense but, for the most part, out of the spotlight. Heretofore hidden are the powerful collaborative efforts to transform urban communities and enrich the lives of their poorest citizens.

Unique collaboration among communities and foundations

In May 1992 an unusual conference—*Building Strong Communities: Strategies for Urban Change*—brought together these diverse initiatives. Recognizing common goals and differences in short-term objectives and means, the planning team of community and foundation representatives viewed the gathering as an experiment in learning across sites, collaboration, and network building. Delegations from more than 16 cities included advocates and planners, neighborhood leaders, mayors and city managers, university researchers, service providers and educators, bankers and lawyers and foundation officials. They gathered to test strategies, challenge assumptions, reflect on what they have learned, expand the arsenal of approaches, and fortify the ranks in the campaign to improve the quality of life in urban communities.

Three initiatives provided the primary participants: *Community Planning and Action Projects, Neighborhood and Family Initiative, and New Futures.* They vary significantly in their genesis, life span, organizational structure, and original targets. A fourth, the *Casey Child Welfare Reform Initiative,* varies as well in its connection to state government (see sidebars). They nevertheless share several characteristics:

- They were created to foster positive change in the lives of poor people and distressed urban neighborhoods and communities.
- They focus sustained attention on poor children and adults in targeted neighborhoods or entire communities.
- They are community-based.
- They depend on developing collaborations among different agencies and organizations—or among a broad range of individuals and organizations that have a stake in a neighborhood or community
- They deal with many issues, crossing professional disciplines, community agencies, and policy dimensions.

An urgent need for action

The conference had a special urgency for several reasons. Conditions have worsened substantially in the past decade or so. Years of deepening urban poverty affecting millions of citizens, and children disproportionately, were compounded by a widespread recession. More than a decade of inattention to cities by national policymakers had taken its toll in deteriorating housing and commercial structures, diminishing employment opportunities, weakened community-based and supportive service organizations, disorganized and isolated family circumstances, and the tragedies of violence, drugs, and homelessness.

The flight of more affluent families from the inner city, many of them minorities, has removed a stable, employment-connected group of residents, making the links to the formal labor market, let alone to mentors and role models, even more fragile for those left

The Neighborhood and Family Initiative, developed by the Ford Foundation in 1990, applies the interdependent strategies of physical, economic, and social development toward the alleviation of poverty. In Detroit, Hartford, Memphis, and Milwaukee, each project in the initiative has developed a broad-based collaborative of neighborhood residents and other critical public- and private-sector stakeholders to identify and marshal investment and action to address key concerns of a specific neighborhood. By vesting leadership and staff support in the local community foundation, the initiative has sought to both build the capacity of a significant community institution to engage in effective neighborhood development and draw upon the resources that institution has, or can leverage, for change.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures program is operating in five cities: Bridgeport, Dayton, Little Rock, Pittsburgh, and Savannah. The foundation and its community grantees targeted reduction of teen unemployment, teen dropouts, and teen pregnancy as the key outcomes of their five-year effort. Through "oversight collaboratives" composed of responsible elected and appointed officials, business leaders, parents, and providers, each New Futures project serves as a focal point for local decisionmaking about at-risk youth and as a mechanism for improving the performance of youth-serving institutions. The projects use a combination of strategies targeting primarily middle schools—such as case management, additional services, supports, and program opportunities for students, management information systems, and new approaches to financing systems of services—to achieve systemic change and improve the outcomes for low-income teenagers.

behind. And an increasing number of inner-city households are headed by women. "As we approach the end of the twentieth century, the problems of poverty, joblessness, and social isolation in the inner-city ghetto remain among the most serious challenges facing municipal and national policymakers," declared University of Chicago sociologist William Julius Wilson.

Voices for change have been fragmented and barely audible. The dire circumstances facing millions of low-income and minority Americans and the pervasive sense of hopelessness have not received a commensurate response from either the government or the American public.

Just a few weeks before the conference, the nation was shaken by the eruption of the multiethnic poor and working-class community of South Central Los Angeles in response to the acquittal of white policemen in the beating of Rodney King, a black man. While the timing of the conference was coincidental, the events highlighted the need to redouble efforts to get the fruits of private initiatives into the public arena.

Some of the conference dialogue recalled the activity and urgency of 25 years ago, when the "War on Poverty" was conceived, but also noted marked differences. Heightening the urgency are shifts in global and national economies and in labor market structures, shifts that have reduced job opportunities and wage rates in inner cities. State and federal coffers are nearly empty, further inhibiting governmental commitment to the social welfare agenda. Public trust in elected officials to address the common good is at an all-time low, stirred by a decade-long negative political tide.

As poverty persists in affecting millions of Americans—deepening with more poor people having even fewer resources, and escalating, particularly among children—the consequences require responses different not only in extent but also in kind.

Yet local practitioners and policymakers alike have been operating in a context where government is essentially absent. Government's commitment, to the extent it was ever there, has proved evanescent. And whatever the reasons for government's abandonment of cities and the poor, the effects are serious and have been deleterious over the long term.

Further, racial inequality and other issues of discrimination—which could earlier be remedied by law or appeals to a sense of justice and morality—can no longer be addressed solely by legal remedies. Questions of class and economics have complicated both the problems and the search for potential solutions.

Finally, there is greater appreciation of poverty's tenacious hold on people, including many who work full time, and for the assets that poor people and neighborhoods can bring to changing their circumstances. There is a new realism: poverty is not something that can be wished away. And there is a new understanding: in much more sophisticated ways than before, we have to rely on and support the efforts of people and communities to build their own paths out of poverty.

Thus, there is a heightened need for action, but action needs to be seasoned by careful thought and testing. Action for its own sake is not enough; it is imperative to know what action will be effective.

All these realities temper the unbridled idealism that has carried so many into the arena to fight for social justice and provided the public support for social change. They have also shaped the context for emergent private initiatives and affect the lessons to be drawn from their experience.

Common themes

Comprehensive investments in neighborhoods

An area recognized by its inhabitants as a neighborhood or community can be the target of many kinds of investments and activities. Confronted with the complexity of regenerating distressed neighborhoods, Ron Shiffman, director of the Pratt Institute's Center on Environmental and Community Development, emphasized the value of "symbiotically integrat[ing]" this neighborhood development activity, knitting more closely together job creation, child care services, housing and commercial development, health, education, and social support programs. Such notions of coordination and comprehensiveness also undergird alternative models for delivering human services and some efforts at school reform, according to Connecticut's Commis-

sioner of Income Maintenance Audrey Rowe and University of Pennsylvania law professor and former education administrator Ralph Smith. These notions apply as well to neighborhood economic development, where producing a stable housing inventory and an educated and trained work force may be essential elements of generating capital formation or attracting new financial investment. And they suggest an approach for enhancing community development corporations—which may have been generally successful over the years at developing commercial or residential infrastructure but without developing adequate training and support for residents to benefit from the jobs that were created or to sustain ownership of the homes they built or rehabilitated.

Integrative planning and organizing

Three ingredients are basic to such holistic approaches. First, "integrative planning and organizing" sets the stage for understanding the community's vision and setting out the steps to reach it. This requires investing in and nurturing community-based organizations or development corporations. Such investments should ensure their capacity for continuity, as well as their organizational ability to involve community members in program development, planning, and operations.

Good strategic planning depends heavily on getting the facts about local conditions. But it is no longer enough to base the planning and organizing for urban change on traditional assessments of need or perceptions of deficiencies. The assumptions underlying traditional assessments have too often resulted in critical decisions affecting a low-income community being made elsewhere. They have also reinforced a perception that the residents and institutions that give the neighborhood its vitality have little to offer in appraising the factors contributing to its distress, controlling the resources affecting its renewal, or articulating its goals and aspirations. They have overlooked opportunities to deploy tangible things—people, land, buildings, and local groups and institutions, such as churches—in entrepreneurial approaches to the broadest vision of community and human development. And they have signaled the rejection of many intangible things: language, culture, history, rituals, pride. "If we could learn to see the assets," asserted longtime educator and member of the U.S. Commission for Civil Rights, Blandina Cardenas Ramirez, "we could once again begin to trust that the solutions to our inner-city problems must be fashioned not for those communities, but with, of, and by those communities."

Building coalitions for change

A second ingredient entails engaging the stakeholders inside and outside the targeted area. Many are the same actors who have been involved in change efforts over the years, but their engagement needs to be intensified and the array of participants has to be broadened. In today's context, the old relationships—between service provider and client or between educator and student—are not proving very successful. Rowe pointed out that engaging families and others who are affected in the design, implementation, and evaluation of basic health, welfare, education, and social services is critical for individual empowerment and for improved effectiveness. "In communities suffering the loss of cohesion and infrastructure, building a core of leaders can be as vital a goal as the more immediate need to get basic services to families in need." Smith calls further for a "renegotiation of the school-community compact," for the empowerment not only of individuals but also of the community. It is also important to identify and address the interests of the broader public—citizens in other parts of the city, or voluntary and public agencies whose base is outside the area, or residents of nearby suburbs, or major businesses and employers. This is essential for building broader coalitions for change and seeking support beyond the inner city.

Facing persistent discrimination

Third, strategists seeking expanded alliances to revitalize urban communities must face persistent concerns about how to deal with race and ethnicity in an increasingly pluralistic society. Wilson and Peter Edelman, professor of law at the Georgetown University Law Center, each emphasized the complex interplay among race, discrimination, attitudes,

Child Welfare Reform initiatives at the state level, also conceived by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, have given rise to community-based governing entities that focus attention on improving outcomes for vulnerable children, especially those in substitute care or at risk of removal from their families. While oriented more toward the child welfare system than New Futures' focus on education, this initiative makes similar efforts to generate new governing structures and financing mechanisms to support shifting the focus of practitioners and the public toward families. The initiative is completing its fourth year in two states, Maryland and North Dakota.

Community Planning and Action Projects (CPAPs) in six cities were seeded by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1987–88 to address the needs of the persistently poor. Boston, Cleveland, Denver, Oakland, San Antonio, and Washington, D.C., each established a mechanism that would generate data and analysis of the data and then construct strategies in response to that information. The CPAPs vary considerably in structure—Cleveland established the Commission on Poverty and a supporting, university-based research institute, Denver and Boston based their efforts in local foundations, Oakland and San Antonio created freestanding nonprofit organizations, and Washington linked a "strategies committee" to a respected local research center.

Whether through comprehensive planning processes or entrepreneurial program development, CPAPs serve as catalysts for collaborative activity and intensified local focus on low-income communities.

and actions. According to Edelman, we need to confront the fact that "ugly, operative, effective" racism continues to harm significant numbers of people and, at the same time, demonstrate that we differentiate between racism and using race as an excuse for "limitations or failures to take responsibility on the part of some individuals."

Discrimination persists, though often in subtle forms, and the facts proving it need to be exposed. But many race-neutral factors also limit opportunity. Wilson—whose 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, helped reopen national debate about poverty and race—now suggests that racial stereotyping, particularly of black males, contributes to employers' reluctance to hire them and deepens their negative self-perception, dampening their interest in trying to seek jobs in the marketplace. And in some communities where higher-paying manufacturing jobs have disappeared and been replaced by the low-wage service sector, black men's dissatisfaction with their jobs aggravates their ability to get and hold employment.

Expanding opportunities and choice

Is the only choice to improve the inner city or help people move out? No, not in the view of many participants. A goal that resounded throughout the conference is to enable individuals to exercise choices not only about where they live, but also about how they live. Expanding on this notion, Edelman argued that "to give people the wherewithal to get out of the inner city, you have to take the same steps and pursue the same policies as to the inner city itself that you would take if you were going to try to create a viable community there." Good schools, decent health care, accessible employment, good housing, effective law enforcement, renewed development strategies, and improved services for families are necessary either way. For youths, mentors and role models can help them envision pathways to a fuller life.

Working with all levels of government

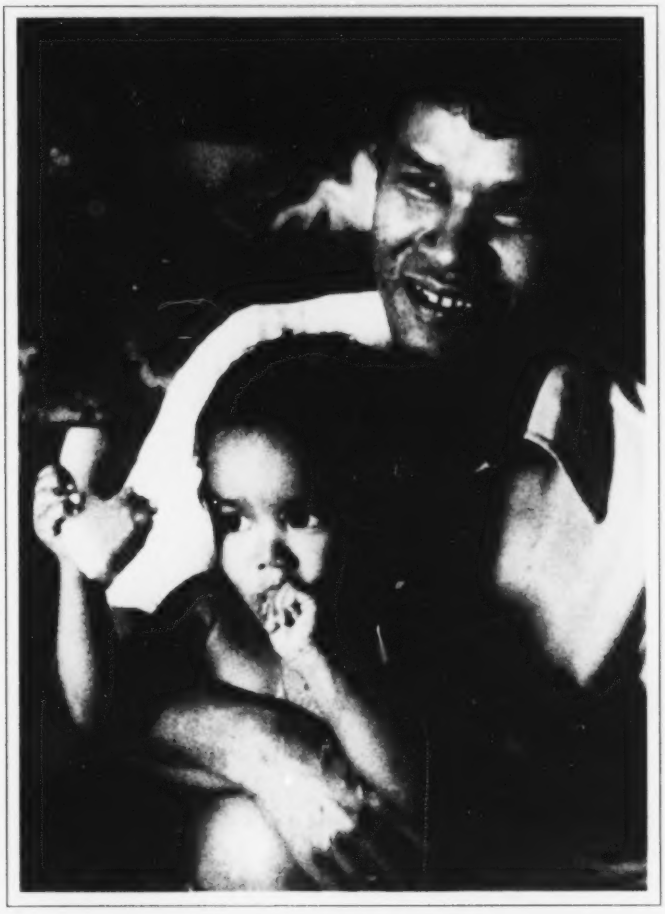
Another recurring theme of the conference is the need to address state and national policy while working in communities. Federal retrenchment has placed enormous decision-making authority at the state level for programs and resource allocation directly affecting the well-being of poor families and the renewability of inner-city communities. And the federal government, despite its fiscal abandonment of the cities, retains responsibility for ensuring equity and social justice. It is thus critical to hold policymakers accountable at all levels of government and to apply the lessons of local strategies and experience to public policy.

Conclusion

Private investment and nonprofit activities will not cure poverty, but they can generate new ideas and renewed commitment, develop and enhance leadership opportunities, and facilitate the diffusion of knowledge gained from local experience. Each initiative has fostered innovative ways to think about the political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics of neighborhoods and communities and about ways of developing their opportunity and support structures. Each has been a catalyst for new community-based priority-setting mechanisms and innovative approaches to using public and private resources more effectively. Each is giving voice to the needs, perceptions, and energies of neighborhood residents. And through collaborations and new coalitions, each has mobilized new allies for change and deepened the dedication of many who have labored to improve the quality of life of people in poverty.

This cadre of local leaders has both endurance and experience. And through exposure to each other and to other cities' initiatives at this conference, they gained support from one another and strengthened the voice for change. In the face of poverty's continuing assault on families and communities and the increasing deterioration of neighborhoods, that alone is worth celebrating. Even more valuable, however, are the opportunities to build on their knowledge and to hone the lessons from their experience to advance a national agenda for change. Above all, the conference was an affirmation that community-based strategies are essential for remedying long-standing problems of poverty in America's cities.

Keynote Address



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Race, class, and poverty in urban America: A comparative perspective

William Julius Wilson

Industrial restructuring severely curtailed the occupational advancement of the more disadvantaged urban minority members

My remarks this evening—on the differences among blacks, whites, and Mexican Americans— will be based mainly on research that I and members of my research team have been conducting in Chicago since 1986. Our research project is called the Chicago Urban Poverty and Family Life Study. It includes three surveys. One is of 2,495 African American, Hispanic, and white households in Chicago's poor neighborhoods, conducted in 1987 and 1988. A second is of a subsample of 175 respondents from the larger survey who were reinterviewed with open-ended questions solely on their perceptions of the opportunity structure and life chances. The third is a stratified random sample conducted in 1988 of 185 employers, designed to reflect the distribution of employment across industry and firm size in the Chicago metropolitan area. The project also includes comprehensive ethnographic research, including participant-observation research and life-history interviews conducted by ten of my research assistants in 1987 and 1988 in a sample of the inner-city neighborhoods.

Inner-city blacks versus immigrant ethnic groups

A familiar and convenient argument is often invoked to explain the different labor-market success of recent immigrants and inner-city blacks: because immigrants have higher rates of employment despite less formal education, the high and growing jobless rate among inner-city blacks is voluntary. The counter-argument is that the current jobless rate among inner-city blacks is an indication of increased racism. But the issues are far more complex than those implied in these assumptions. Some fundamental differences between blacks and, say, immigrant Mexicans have to be taken into account, including neighborhood differences. I explore some of these differences by focusing first on variations in ethnic group experiences with a changing national economy.

Economic restructuring and inner-city employment

In 1974, 47 percent of employed black males aged 20–24 held blue-collar, semiskilled machine and skilled craft positions that typically earned wages adequate to support a family. By 1986 that figure had plummeted to 25 percent. Industrial restructuring severely curtailed the occupational advancement of the more disadvantaged urban minority members. John Kasarda's research shows that "the bottom fell out in urban industrial demand for poorly educated blacks" (1989, p. 35), particularly in the goods-producing industries, in northeastern and midwestern cities.

Data from our large survey show that industrial restructuring has hampered efforts by out-of-school inner-city black men to obtain blue-collar jobs in the industries that employed their fathers. "The most common occupation reported by the cohort of respondents at ages 19–28 changed from operative and assembler jobs among the oldest cohorts to service jobs (waiters and janitors) among the youngest cohort" (Testa and Krogh 1989).

Occupational shifts in Chicago reflect these changes. More than 10,000 manufacturing establishments operated within the city limits in 1954, employing a total of 616,000, including nearly half a million blue-collar or production workers. By 1982 the number of plants had been cut by half, providing a mere 277,000 jobs and fewer than 162,000 blue-collar jobs—a loss of 63 percent. Substantial cuts in trade employment accompanied the decline of the city's industrial base. Retail and wholesale lost more than 120,000 jobs from 1963 to 1982. The mild growth in service employment fell far short of compensating for the collapse of Chicago's low-skilled employment pool. The economic recovery from 1983 to 1987 was not

sufficient to offset the devastating employment losses during the recession-prone years of the 1970s (Wacquant and Wilson 1989).

In our Chicago study, both black men and black women said that more of their friends have lost jobs because of plant closings than did Mexican Americans and the other ethnic groups. Moreover, almost half of black fathers and 40 percent of black mothers stated that they were at high risk of losing their jobs because of plant shutdowns. Only a third of the Mexican American parents, a quarter of white fathers, and 20 percent of white mothers felt this way.

The combination of industrial restructuring and periodic recessions has thus had a much more devastating impact on black males, particularly young black males, than on other groups. Whereas blacks were pushed out of manufacturing into personal service jobs, laboring jobs, and joblessness, Mexican Americans held onto their manufacturing jobs more often and for longer periods of time. Whites, by contrast, were also forced out of manufacturing but were more successful than blacks in finding other sources of employment, such as skilled trades and nonlaboring jobs.

The spatial mismatch between central-city residence and the location of employment has aggravated the employment problems of inner-city blacks. Studies based on data collected before 1970 did not show consistent or convincing effects on black employment from this spatial mismatch (see, for example, Ellwood 1986). But the employment of inner-city blacks relative to suburban ones has clearly deteriorated since then (Holzer 1990). Recent research by urban and labor economists shows that the decentralization of employment is continuing. Employment in manufacturing, most of which is already suburbanized, has decreased in central cities, particularly in the Northeast and Midwest. Blacks living in central cities have less access to employment—as measured by the ratio of jobs to people and the average travel time to and from work—than do central-city whites. Unlike most other groups of workers, less-educated central-city blacks receive lower wages than less-educated suburban blacks. The decline in earnings of central-city blacks is positively associated with the extent of metropolitan job decentralization (Holzer 1990).

Blacks clearly see a spatial mismatch of jobs. Both black men and women saw greater job prospects outside the city. For example, only one-third of black fathers from ghetto poverty areas (areas with poverty rates of at least 30 percent) reported that their best opportunities for employment were in the city. More than 60 percent of whites and 54 percent of Mexican Americans in similar neighborhoods felt this way.

An economic structural argument helps explain the loss of black and white jobs in manufacturing and the changes in employment opportunities, including spatial changes. But it does not account for the success of Mexican Americans in holding onto manufacturing jobs or in finding employment more quickly—even though they have considerably less formal education than either blacks or whites. It also does not explain why inner-city whites who have also lost manufacturing jobs are more successful than blacks in finding other employment. There are other social structural variables that pertain to neighborhoods, social networks, and households, and these have yet to be considered.

Blacks clearly see a spatial mismatch of jobs

The relevance of neighborhoods, social networks, and households

The neighborhoods, households, and social networks of blacks and Mexican immigrants differ in ways that distinctly affect employment and labor force participation.[1] "Both male and female Mexican immigrants living in poverty areas are employed at higher rates than similar blacks" (Van Haitsma, p. 6). Although Mexican Americans and blacks "face the same industrial mix and broad labor market conditions, the immediate social environments in which the two groups cluster are not the same" (Van Haitsma, p. 2).

Blacks tend to live in neighborhoods with much higher concentrations of poverty than either Mexican Americans or whites. As time has passed, these neighborhoods have experienced increasing social disorganization. Consider, for a moment, the changes in the community of Woodlawn, on the South Side of Chicago. In 1950 it had more than 800 com-

[1] Most of the Mexican Americans in our study were immigrants. Our sample was restricted to poverty areas—areas with poverty rates of at least 20 percent. In Chicago, Mexican immigrants are concentrated more heavily in poverty areas than in nonpoverty areas.

The neighborhoods, households, and social networks of blacks and Mexican immigrants differ in ways that distinctly affect employment and labor force participation

mercial and industrial establishments. Today only about a 100 are left, many of them "tiny catering places, barber shops, and thrift stores with no more than one or two employees" (Wacquant, p. 17). Wacquant continues: "The once-lively streets—residents remember a time, not so long ago, when crowds were so dense at rush hour that one had to elbow one's way to the station—now have the appearance of an empty, bombed-out war zone. The commercial strip has been reduced to a long tunnel of charred stores, vacant lots littered with broken glass and garbage, and dilapidated buildings left to rot in the shadow of the elevated train line. At the corner of 63rd Street and Cottage Grove Avenue, the handful of remaining establishments that struggle to survive are huddled behind wrought-iron bars....The only enterprises that seem to be thriving are liquor stores and currency exchanges, these 'banks of the poor' where one can cash checks, pay bills and buy money orders for a fee" (pp. 17–18).

Like many other inner-city neighborhoods of Chicago, Woodlawn first experienced a large outmigration of whites. A substantial exodus of black working-class and middle-class families followed. These changes significantly altered the class structure of the neighborhood. I have advanced the theoretical argument that the outmigration of higher-income families increased the social isolation of inner-city neighborhoods (Wilson 1987). Social isolation deprives residents of certain inner-city neighborhoods not only of resources and conventional role models—whose former presence buffered the effects of neighborhood joblessness—but also of cultural learning from mainstream social networks that facilitates social and economic advancement in modern industrial society.

Black neighborhoods have a greater effect on their residents because they are so heavily impoverished. Unlike blacks in Chicago, Mexican Americans seldom reside in neighborhoods with poverty rates that exceed 40 percent. Blacks are not only disproportionately concentrated in these extreme-poverty neighborhoods, they are also disproportionately concentrated in neighborhoods with rates of poverty that exceed 30 percent.

Our data suggest that the concept of social isolation is most usefully conceived as "sustaining poverty in three dimensions" (Pedder, p. 37). First, social isolation operates in the black neighborhood through the lack of access to resources provided by stable working residents. Such resources include informal job networks and stable neighborhood institutions. In the Chicago black ghetto neighborhoods that we studied, social contacts were far more successful in helping residents gain informal work to help make ends meet than in obtaining steady employment; networks existed but generally lacked the capacity to elevate residents into the formal labor market. For example, black men and women in our sample are less likely to report that they received help from a friend in obtaining their current job. Also, both black males and black females use the public transit system more often than Mexican Americans, who rely more heavily on carpooling. "Both carpooling and having obtained a job with the help of a friend are indications that Mexican American workers often work with friends" (Van Haitsma, p. 17).

The second dimension of social isolation emerges in the concentration of nonwork behavior in response to the limited social resources that created the first dimension. In environments with high concentrations of nonwork behavior, there are more hurdles in the path that leads to the formal labor market, and pressures increase to pursue alternative modes of subsistence, including welfare, informal activity, drug dealing, and other illegal activities.

The third dimension of social isolation operates through geographical isolation, expressed in feelings of confinement to the ghetto neighborhood and exclusion from other neighborhoods. This geographical isolation in black ghetto neighborhoods produces real social isolation—in the segregation of residents from new job opportunities in the suburbs—and psychological social isolation—in feeling cut off from the rest of the city.

Just as there are differences between the neighborhoods and social networks of blacks and the other ethnic groups, so too are there differences in household. Black women face far greater challenges in the household. Whereas 44 percent of black women living with their children have no other adults in the household, only 6.5 percent of comparable

Mexican American women have no other adults in the household. Moreover, black women whose coresident children are under 12 years of age are eight times more likely than comparable Mexican women to live in a single-adult household. "Network differences translate into childcare differences. Mexican women with young children are significantly more likely than their black counterparts to have regular childcare provided by a relative or friend" (Van Haitsma, p. 16).

The high percentage of black mothers who live with young children in single-adult households is associated with problems of labor force attachment. Our research revealed that if a single mother lives in a coresidential household and receives informal child support, she significantly improves her chances of entering the labor force. Among the mothers not receiving AFDC, those who lived in a coresidential household and received informal child care had a 90 percent probability of labor force activity. By contrast, those who lived in single households and did not receive informal child care had only a 60 percent probability of working. And, of the women on AFDC who candidly reported that they worked at least part time, probably in the informal economy, those who lived in a coresidential household and received informal child care were more than five times more likely to work as those who lived in single households and did not receive informal child care.

I previously noted that recent structural economic changes have clearly had an adverse effect on the employment experiences of inner-city blacks, but that a purely structural economic explanation for black economic woes is not sufficient. "Were pure market forces responsible for the observed differences in employment statuses," Tienda and Steir (1991) argue, "Latinos should experience the highest levels of labor market hardship in Chicago, and particularly those of Mexican origin who, in addition to [having] very low levels of education, often lack adequate language skills owing to the recency of their migration to the United States."

The issues I have just explored take us beyond a discussion of pure market forces. They show that inner-city blacks reside in neighborhoods and are embedded in social networks and households that are *less conducive to employment* than are the neighborhoods, networks, and households of the other ethnic groups, especially the immigrant Mexicans. What has not been addressed is how mainstream interpretations of these ethnic differences influence decisions about employment—decisions that can reinforce or strengthen the weak labor force attachment of inner-city blacks and how other factors contribute to this as well. This brings us to the meaning and significance of race.

The high percentage of black mothers who live with young children in single-adult households is associated with problems of labor force attachment

The meaning and significance of race

Years ago, when black males sought jobs, employers checked mainly their strength and stamina. Industries that involved strenuous work readily employed black men. Our data show that 51 percent of Chicago's employed inner-city black males born between 1941 and 1955 worked in manufacturing industries in 1969. By 1987 that figure had plummeted to 29 percent. Of those born between 1956 and 1968, 46 percent worked in manufacturing industries as late as 1974. By 1987 that figure had declined to 25 percent.

These employment changes accompanied the loss of traditional manufacturing and other blue-collar jobs in Chicago. As a result, young black males turned increasingly to low-wage laborer and service sector jobs for employment—or went jobless. But, as stated previously, the economic structural argument does not account for the greater success of the other ethnic groups in holding onto these jobs as they declined or in finding other employment when their industries shut down. I have partly addressed this problem in our research on the influence of different racial and ethnic neighborhoods, social networks, and households. Let us now consider the significance of race.

As one inner-city manufacturer from our study put it, "when we hear other employers talk, they'll go after primarily the Hispanic and Oriental first, those two, and, I'll qualify that even further, the Mexican Hispanic, and any Oriental, and after that, that's pretty much it, that's pretty much where they like to draw the line, right there" (oral interview). Interviews of a representative sample of Chicago-area employers by our research team show that many consider inner-city blacks—especially young

These strong negative views of black men have only recently emerged

black males—to be uneducated, unstable, uncooperative, and dishonest. For example, a suburban drugstore manager said: "It's unfortunate but, in my business I think overall [black men] tend to be known to be dishonest. I think that's too bad but that's the image they have. [Interviewer: "So you think it's an image problem?"] "Yeah, a dishonest—an image problem of being dishonest men and lazy. They're known to be lazy. They are [laughs]. I hate to tell you, but it's all an image though. Whether they are or not, I don't know, but it's an image that is perceived." [Interviewer: "I see. How do you think that image was developed?"] "Go look in the jails [laughs]" (oral interview).

The employer-survey data reveal that racial stereotyping is greater among those Chicago employers with lower proportions of blacks in their workforce, especially the blue-collar employers who tend to stress the importance of unobservable qualities such as work attitudes. As one respondent states: "The black work ethic. There's no work ethic. At least at the unskilled [level]. I'm sure with the skilled as you go up, it's a lot different" (Neckerman and Kirschenman 1990).

Given such attitudes, the lack of black access to informal job networks is a particular problem for black males, as revealed in the following comments by an employer: "All of a sudden, they take a look at a guy, and unless he's got an in, the reason why I hired this black kid the last time is cause my neighbor said to me, yeah I used him for a few [days], he's good, and I said, you know what, I'm going to take a chance. But it was a recommendation. But other than that, I've got a walk-in and who knows? And I think that for the most part, a guy sees a black man, he's a bit hesitant, because I don't know" (oral interview).

How and why have such attitudes developed? The success that black men had in obtaining manufacturing and other blue-collar jobs in previous years suggests that these strong negative views have only recently emerged. Our data show that of the employed men in the 1941–55 age cohort from poor Chicago neighborhoods, the proportion of blacks in manufacturing and construction was only slightly below that of whites and higher than that of Hispanics in 1974. In addition, the proportion from the 1956–69 birth cohort was considerably above that of Puerto Ricans and whites and only slightly below that of Mexican Americans in 1974.

Regardless of the timing, many inner-city black residents share the employers' perception of black men. Responses from our smaller survey of open-ended questions (Social Opportunity Survey) and from our ethnographic field interviews reveal a consistent pattern of negative views on inner-city black males, especially young black males.

The residents are aware of the problems of male joblessness in their neighborhoods. For example, more than half the black respondents from neighborhoods with poverty rates of at least 40 percent feel that very few or none of the men in their neighborhood are working steadily. More than a third of the respondents from neighborhoods with poverty rates of at least 30 percent expressed that view. Forty percent of the black respondents in all neighborhoods feel that the number of men who are working steadily had decreased over the past ten years.

Some provide explanations that acknowledge the constraints black men face. An employed 25-year-old unmarried father of one child from North Lawndale states: "I know a lot of guys that's my age, that don't work and I know some that works temporary, but wanna work, they just can't get jobs. You know, they got a high school diploma and that... but the thing is, these jobs always say: 'Not enough experience.' How can you get experience if you never had a chance to get any experience?" (oral interview).

Others, however, express views that echo those of the employers. For example, a 30-year-old married father of three children who lives in North Lawndale and works the night shift in a factory states: "I say about 65 percent of black males, I say, don't wanna work, and when I say 'don't wanna work' I say don't wanna work hard—they want a real easy job, making big bucks—See? And, when you start talking about hard labor and earning your money with sweat or just once in a while you gotta put out a little bit—you know, that extra effort, I don't, I don't think the guys really wanna do that. And sometimes it comes from, really, not having a, a steady job or, really, not being out in the work field and just been sittin' back, being comfortable all the time and hanging out" (oral interview).

A 35-year-old welfare mother of eight children from the neighborhood of Englewood states: "Well, I mean see you got all these dudes around here, they don't even work, they don't even try, they don't wanna work. You know what I mean, I wanna work, but I can't work. Then you got people here that, in this neighborhood, can get up and do somethin', they just don't wanna do nothin'—they really don't" (oral interview).

The deterioration of the socioeconomic status of black men may be associated with increases in these negative perceptions. Are these perceptions merely stereotypical, or do they have some basis in fact? Data from our large survey show that social context variables (neighborhoods, social networks, and households) account for substantially more of the employment gap between black and Mexican American men than the attitude variables. Moreover, data from the survey reveal that black men have a lower "reservation wage" than men of the other ethnic groups. Whereas white fathers expected over $9.00 per hour as a condition for working, black men were willing to work for considerably less than $6.00. The reservation wage of Mexican American jobless fathers was $6.20.

But surveys are not the best way to get at underlying attitudes and values. So, to gain a better grasp of values and attitudes, our project included ethnographic research that involved establishing long-term contacts and interviews with residents from several neighborhoods. Analysis of the ethnographic data reveals identifiable and consistent patterns of ethnic group beliefs. Black men are more hostile than the Mexican American men about the low-paying jobs they hold, less willing to be flexible in taking assignments or tasks not considered part of their job, and less willing to work as hard for the same low wages. These contrasts are sharp because many of the Mexican Americans interviewed were recent immigrants.

There are "several important reasons why immigrants, particularly third world immigrants, will tolerate harsher conditions, lower pay, few upward trajectories, and other job-related characteristics that deter native workers, and thereby exhibit a better 'work ethic' than others" (Aponte, p. 41). Two of these reasons were uncovered in our ethnographic data. Immigrants are harder workers because they "come from areas of intense poverty, and even boring, hard, dead-end jobs [in the United States] look, by contrast, good to them" (Taub, p. 14). They also fear being deported if they do not find employment.

The inner-city black men strongly feel that they are victims of discrimination. They complained that they get assigned the heaviest or dirtiest work on the job, are overworked, and are paid less than nonblacks. The immigrant Mexicans also report that they feel exploited, but they tend to express the view that this is to be expected because of the nature of the job. Richard Taub, a researcher on our project, argues that the inner-city black men have a greater sense of "honor" and often see the work, pay, and treatment from bosses as insulting and degrading. Accordingly, a heightened sensitivity to exploitation increases anger and a tendency to "just walk off the job."

The inner-city black men strongly feel that they are victims of discrimination

One cannot understand these attitudes, and how they developed, without considering the growing exclusion of black men from higher-paying blue-collar jobs in manufacturing and other industries and the increasing confinement to low-paying service jobs. Many low-paying jobs have predictably low retention rates. There was a respondent in our employer survey who reported turnover rates that exceeded 50 percent in his firm. When asked if he had considered doing anything about this problem, the employer acknowledged making a rational decision to tolerate a high turnover rather than to increase the starting salary and improve working conditions to attract higher-caliber workers. He stated: "Our practice has been that we'll keep hiring and, hopefully, one or two of them are going to wind up being good" (Neckerman, p. 7).

"This employer, and others like him, can afford such high turnover because the work is simple and can be taught in a couple of days. On average, jobs paying under $5.00 or $6.00 an hour were characterized by high quit rates. In higher-paying jobs, by contrast, the proportion of employees resigning fell to less than 20 percent per year" (Neckerman, p. 8). Yet our data show that the number of inner-city black males in the higher-paying positions has sharply declined. As black males are increasingly displaced from manufacturing industries, their options are becoming confined to low-paying service work. Turnover rates of 50 to 100

percent are common in low-skilled service jobs in Chicago.

The attitudes that many inner-city black males express about their jobs and job prospects thus reflect their plummeting position in a changing labor market. The more they complain and manifest their dissatisfaction, the less desirable they seem to employers. They therefore experience greater discrimination when they seek employment and clash more often with supervisors when they find it. For all these reasons, it is important to link attitudinal and other cultural traits with structural realities.

Residence in highly concentrated poverty neighborhoods aggravates the weak labor force attachment of black males

Residence in highly concentrated poverty neighborhoods aggravates the weak labor force attachment of black males. The absence of effective informal job networks and the prevalence of many illegal activities increase nonmainstream behavior such as hustling. The restructuring of the economy will continue to compound the negative effects of the perceptions of inner-city black males. Because of the increasing shift to service industries, employers have a greater need for workers who can effectively serve the customer. Because employers perceive black men to be threatening and dangerous, it is reasonable to assume that they would prefer black women in situations that "involve presentation of the firm to the public" (Kirschenman, p. 17).

But the restructuring of the urban economy could also have long-term consequences for inner-city women. A change in work cultures has accompanied the transformation of the economy, resulting in a mismatch between the old and new ways of succeeding in the labor market. In other words, there is a growing difference between the practices of blue-collar and service employers and those of white-collar employers. This mismatch is important for understanding the labor market success (or failure) of inner-city workers.

Low-skilled individuals from the inner-city tend to be the children of blue-collar workers or service workers, and they have work experience confined to blue-collar or service jobs. The question is, "what happens when employees socialized to approach jobs and careers in a way that make sense in a blue-collar or service context enter the white-collar world?" (Neckerman, p. 18). The employer interviews suggest that workers from blue-collar or service settings seek positions that carry entry-level salaries, that provide all the necessary training on the job, and that grant privileges and promotion by both seniority and performance. But when they move to a white-collar setting, inner-city workers face entry-level positions that require more and continuous training, employers who are looking for energetic, intelligent individuals with good language skills, and promotions that seldom depend on seniority or occur at regular intervals. Accordingly, the occupational success of inner-city employees may depend on "subtle standards of evaluation, and on behavior that is irrelevant or even negatively sanctioned in the blue-collar and [work] service settings" (Neckerman, pp. 27–28).

Interviews with disadvantaged workers revealed that most recognize the changing nature of the labor market and that a greater premium is placed on education and training for success, but many "did indeed espouse blue-collar ways of getting ahead" (Neckerman, p. 27).

The challenge for policymakers

In summary, the issue of race and employment cannot be simply reduced to discrimination. Although our data suggest that blacks, especially black males, have experienced increased discrimination since the mid 1970s, the reasons include a complex web of interrelated factors, including some that are race-neutral.

The loss of traditional manufacturing and other blue-collar jobs in Chicago resulted in increased joblessness among inner-city black males and a concentration in low-wage, high-turnover laborer and service-sector jobs. Embedded in ghetto neighborhoods, networks, and households that are not conducive to employment, inner-city black males fall further behind their white and their Hispanic male counterparts, especially when the labor market is slack. "Mexicans and Puerto Ricans continue to funnel into manufacturing because employers prefer Hispanics over blacks, and they like to hire by referrals from current employees, which Hispanics can readily furnish, being already embedded in migration networks" (Krogh, p. 12). Inner-city black men grow bitter about and resent their employment prospects and often manifest these feelings in their harsh, often dehumanizing, low-wage work settings.

Their attitudes and actions—combined with erratic work histories in high-turnover jobs—create the widely shared perception that they are undesirable workers. The perception then becomes the basis for employer discrimination that sharply increases when the economy is weak. This discrimination gradually grows over the long term—not only because employers are turning more to the expanding immigrant and female labor force, but also because the number of jobs that require contact with the public continues to climb.

The position of inner-city black women in the labor market is also problematic. Their high degree of social isolation in impoverished neighborhoods, as reflected in social networks, reduces their employment prospects. Although Chicago employers consider them more desirable as workers than they do inner-city black men, the women's social isolation is likely to heighten involvement in a work culture that is not conducive to white-collar employment. In addition, impoverished neighborhoods, weak networks, and weak household supports decrease their ability to develop language and other job-related skills necessary in an economy that rewards employees who can work and communicate effectively with the public.

Segregation in urban ghettos created the neighborhoods, households, and networks that handicap inner-city blacks. Neither Mexican Americans nor whites are as concentrated as blacks in high-poverty and extreme-poverty neighborhoods. The significance of segregation for inner-city blacks has increased following the outmigration of higher-income working and middle-class families from the most impoverished neighborhoods.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, the problems of poverty, joblessness, and social isolation in the inner-city ghetto remain among the most serious challenges facing municipal and national policymakers in the United States. A successful public policy initiative to address these problems requires a close look at the declining labor-market opportunities for the truly disadvantaged. It also requires a close look at the declining social organization of inner-city neighborhoods that reinforces the economic marginality of their residents.

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The issue of race and employment cannot be simply reduced to discrimination

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Session Summaries

SESSION 1

Neighborhoods as an entry point for change

Presenter: Ronald Shiffman, Executive Director, Pratt Institute, Center for Community and Environmental Development, Brooklyn

Moderator: Arthur J. Naparstek, Director, Cleveland Commission on Poverty

Panelists: Tom Cox, President, Neighborhood Progress, Inc., Cleveland; Tom Dalton, City Manager, Little Rock; David Glover, Executive Director, Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal; Ralph Knighton, Executive Director, North Hartford Development Corporation

"Change—improving the quality of life for all our citizens—can be sustained only if we organize from the neighborhood level up to bring about the structural social and economic changes and to create a more equitable and caring society."

Ronald Shiffman

"Policies should flow from community needs. And reforms must flow from decisions made and priorities set at the local level." Art Naparstek opened the first session by stating that this is what the Ford, Casey, and Rockefeller projects are all about—local strategies for social change that have national implications.

The Ford, Casey, and Rockefeller projects focus on local communities and neighborhoods because they are the arena where individuals and families live and where larger forces and policies—for investment, development, education, service delivery, socialization—are played out. Ronald Shiffman argues that it is critical for neighborhoods to develop the organizational and political capacity—individually and collectively—to make local, regional, and national governments responsive and accountable to the needs of local residents and their communities. For him, the need to organize locally is predicated on empowering people and their communities to build two structures: "the internal social, political, and organizational base to address problems on the ground, and the political base through which substantive social, political, and economic change can be achieved at all levels of government, particularly at the federal level."

Shiffman suggested that when we talk of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and empowerment, we must be clear that these concepts depend on government responsibility to address fundamental social, political, and economic inequities in our society. Empowering neighborhoods, and the poor and other disenfranchised populations, means enabling them to make informed choices among viable alternatives and to have the political and economic ability to realize those choices.

Tom Cox differed in the emphasis given to addressing the economic needs of a neighborhood as opposed to advocating political change. He concluded that since city, state, and federal governments keep changing the rules, neighborhoods have to figure out how to survive no matter what set of public policies is in place. Neighborhoods should organize their activities around transactions—saving schools, developing businesses, building housing. Shiffman and David Glover do not believe that it is a contradiction to try to change public policy while engaging in day-to-day transactions in the neighborhood. Shiffman noted that community organizing in Chicago gave birth to the antiredlining movement across the country, which led to the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and the Community Reinvestment Act. Organizing at the neighborhood level created a national framework for encouraging banks to invest in neighborhoods. These federal acts made available the financial resources we use today to rebuild neighborhoods.

Community development and integrated neighborhood planning

A traditional area of community activity since the 1960s, explained Shiffman, has been community development corporations. Despite the withdrawal of government support, many local development organizations were able to carry out successful development-related efforts. But they were often responses to exter-

nally defined standards of need, accountability, and productivity rather than activities that emerged from plans developed to meet locally determined needs and priorities. The result was greater emphasis on development as an end-product.

Shiffman suggested that sustainable community development requires comprehensive and holistic interventions that recognize a range of community needs—social, economic, physical, cultural, spiritual, political—as well as opportunities for personal, group, and community growth. Its success is measured in benefits accruing to the community as a whole rather than to any individual, set of individuals, or sector. This underlying philosophy and the resultant integrative approach are often not consciously understood by planners, donors, grants officers, and government officials who view things programmatically and categorically. But it is embraced by neighborhood residents.

Art Naparstek asked the panel, "What are the keys to getting residents involved in sometimes tedious long-range planning necessary for sustainable change?" Ralph Knighton responded that you can start with something small, such as neighborhood clean-up, and build up to something big, such as a community development corporation. He emphasized that it is important to start with an action-oriented event to get people interested and then use that opportunity to talk to them about their experiences and problems. Knighton reinforced Shiffman's point that "the empowerment of neighborhood residents means that people can make informed choices and develop the political and economic will to realize change. This empowerment comes about by exposing people to the systems and activities that will allow them to make those decisions."

Glover emphasized that it is critical to meet residents where they live—no matter how they define their neighborhood. Another important element in getting residents involved in long-range planning is to make planning a proactive and meaningful exercise by involving them in gathering information and assessing needs. Residents should also be involved in sharing this information with other communities and with people they do not regularly interact with—to form multiethnic, multicultural collaborations.

Shiffman suggested that a "visioning" process could be used to develop comprehensive plans to address the myriad problems facing communities. Often structured to jump into the future to disarm those who come to the table with their own agenda, this process uses dialogue groups to talk out vital issues of concern to the community. Once a vision for the future is agreed to, discussion can shift back to the present without risking domination of the dialogue by narrow interests—possible because people have learned to trust each other and because consensus has been reached on long-term goals.

Tom Dalton explained that in Little Rock they use a bottom-up planning process that involves the entire community. A steering committee and a number of task forces maximize the number of people involved. Thought of as strategic planning for a public corporation, the process can be long, but it brings people to the table who have never been there before. Knighton explained that in Hartford the private sector is taking the lead in a visioning process that involves all sectors of the community in developing a plan for Hartford

It is important to start with an action-oriented event to get people interested and then use that opportunity to talk to them about their experiences and problems

Prerequisites to progressive social change

- Obtain a political mandate to undertake an aggressive planning process with an agreement to respect that process.
- Agree on a set of goals and a common vision of what is to be accomplished.
- Establish a community-based planning and development entity that is accountable to its constituency and is recognized by a variety of the area's stakeholders.
- Select and engage in a planning process that is inclusive and participatory.
- Select a mode of intervention that is commensurate with the community's organizational capacity and its ability to influence decisions.
- Commit to a continuity of effort over time and demand from public and private sources the resources needed to carry out that commitment.

and the region—thus giving all residents a sense of ownership in the future of their city.

Mustafa Abdul-Salaam from New Haven asked: "How do you get professionals to buy into a long-range planning process? How do you get professionals to realize the importance of building relationships and trust with neighborhood residents and to respect what they bring to the table?" Because professionals—even community organizers—can become removed from the communities they represent, Glover urged that professionals be taken out of their environment and to meet residents where they live. Such a hands-on approach builds trust. But, as Shiffman noted, there are no training programs for community organizing, and its importance in building strong vehicles for change has not been recognized.

If you can get partnerships around common services, you can move to the concept of a shared revenue source

Issues of choice and unintended outcomes

The maximization of individual and collective choice, one major objective of progressive change, translates the neighborhood level into two interrelated goals. The first is to enhance people's ability to choose by providing the opportunity structures to enable them to stay or leave. The second is to enhance people's ability to choose by eliminating obstacles—crime, poor schools, dirty streets, lack of decent and affordable housing—that deter people from moving into the area or upwardly mobile residents from remaining. These two goals can be achieved by closely linking economic and social investment strategies.

Little Rock's history of trying to balance economic and social development is somewhat different from that in other cities, explained Tom Dalton. Through aggressive annexation, the city has captured much of the suburban growth to protect its municipal tax base—and many of those who usually leave the city as they become economically mobile. Dalton believes, however, that some neighborhood strategies seem to go against the natural trends of mobility. In Little Rock, the issue is how to offer the same mobility to minorities who want to move into newer areas and how to stop the decline in older neighborhoods. All sectors of the city are learning that they are in this together and that they need to find solutions together. The goal is to diversify the entire population base. One way to develop a common ground that will get inner-city residents and residents of outlying areas to cooperate and begin to work together is through specific functions that they share—transport, utilities, planning. If you can get partnerships around common services, you can move to the concept of a shared revenue source.

Henry Moore noted that Savannah is doing similar things but still losing population. He asked, "What can we do about the negative perceptions of city neighborhoods?" Dalton said that there is an amazing lack of trust between blacks and whites, between lower- and upper-income people, and among established public agency representatives and neighborhood leaders. They all share the problems of drugs, crime, housing, and jobs, but the impact in low-income neighborhoods is devastating. He argued that you have to bring issues of race and racism to the planning table. As part of the visioning process, they pulled together data on gains and losses in the Little Rock region. The public found out that there

Participatory planning processes should focus on the need:

- To undertake community planning.
- To organize internally and externally to bring about change.
- To identify internal and external strengths and weaknesses.
- To coordinate existing activities whenever and wherever possible, recognizing that there will be differences among many of the organizations and a need by some to retain their autonomy.
- To integrate strategies and program initiatives to maximize potential outcomes.
- To establish systems of evaluation and feedback, particularly those that reinforce positive outcomes and relationships, and to rethink those activities that do not work.
- To understand the interdependence between local initiatives and the macro-political environment and to try to engage on both the micro and macro level.

was decline in five of the eight planning sectors—black and white—and that Little Rock is as racially segregated as it was in 1980. This information led to public awareness that everyone is connected with everyone else and that the solutions must include them all.

Shiffman agreed on the need for greater recognition of the interrelationships of the central city and the surrounding suburbs, and Little Rock shows that much of this recognition means overcoming ignorance and attitudes. If low-income communities are not seen as second-rate communities, you can get rid of exclusionary zoning, link downtown development with affordable housing development, allow for a diversity of incomes, and build cultural and commercial centers in the neighborhoods.

Community change through economic development

One way to make communities desirable is through community economic development, and one important element of community economic development as a neighborhood strategy is money, according to Tom Cox. If you look at the history of cities, ethnic enclaves often mobilized capital through instruments of various kinds—showing how economic development must begin with a capital mobilization strategy that fits the community. A second important element of community economic development is knowledge and technology. Economic development cannot be just setting up storefront businesses or developing products that are not linked to growing industries. Neighborhoods must figure out a way to link their development to the global economy.

Knighton emphasized that economic development must be comprehensive, cooperative, and sequential, with a host of factors addressed simultaneously. Commercial revitalization must start with the private sector but have the support of the city and the public. The housing stock has to be stabilized, and people have to be ready to take new jobs and support the economic development efforts.

Glover believes that expanded community education is required to meet this challenge. Neighborhoods must be involved in local and state policy decisions that give incentives for development in the local communities. Municipalities must be committed to linking emerging jobs in the area to the neighborhoods, and employment training must be linked to emerging job markets. For this to happen, mutual support and understanding between public officials and neighborhoods must be nurtured and sustained. Neighborhoods are more powerful than they realize and can hold public officials accountable.

Dalton warned, however, that economic development ventures cannot be too site-specific. He believes disinvestment will continue in cities unless there is an urban strategy for the entire city, which would require a fundamental rethinking of federal policies that have led to categorical programs. Community economic development will not work until you get more money into the hands of people in poor communities.

There needs to be greater recognition of the interrelationships of the central city and the surrounding suburbs

Elements of a national urban policy to meet the challenges of a global economy

- Invest in public school systems—from preschool to retraining workers.
- Invest in infrastructure to create jobs, rebuild roads, build housing, build and expand public transit, address environmental pollution and environmental racism.
- Invest in health care.
- Invest in the cultural identity of our country.
- Build cities with global or regional spheres of influence.

SESSION 2

"There exists in poor and inner-city communities the same spectrum of intelligence, talents, character, wisdom, and stamina as exists anywhere in the our society. What is missing is the opportunity, the exposure, the support, the wherewithal, the models, the expectation of possibilities."

Blandina Cardenas Ramirez

The implications of an asset orientation for urban change strategies

Presenter: Blandina Cardenas Ramirez, Director, Southwest Center for Values, Achievement, and Community in Education, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas

Moderator: Susan Motley, Director, Neighborhood and Family Initiative, Center for Community Change, Washington, D.C.

Panelists: Sarah Ann Ford, Project Coordinator, Milwaukee Foundation; Grant Jones, Co-Director, The Piton Foundation Poverty Project, Denver; Stan Hyland, Chair of Anthropology Department, Memphis State University; Janis Parks, Executive Director, Baltimore City Family Preservation Initiative

"For the past twenty years, most of us have been involved in defining, measuring, researching, and in other ways characterizing dysfunction, disorganization, and distress. ...A serious and critical examination of assets and opportunities is needed to identify potential, to harness that potential, and to direct its actualization." This, according to Susan Motley, was the challenge that the panelists addressed in this session and that Blandina Cardenas Ramirez took up in her presentation. Ramirez asked, "How do we identify—and make visible for purposes of urban change systems—the often intangible assets in a community? How does a context that recognizes both assets and needs cause us to rethink both our program strategies and our advocacy? How do we evaluate the effectiveness of what we do in this new context?"

An asset orientation

The concept of an asset orientation draws heavily on John McKnight's work that focuses on a neighborhood's assets—rather than its deficits—as a basis for development and renewal. It also draws heavily on the family resource movement's principles of universality and family strengths. Although McKnight's emphasis is on a community's quantifiable assets, Ramirez focused on an analysis of the often intangible human assets—individual, family, and community—that exist in every community.

Ramirez spoke about recent innovations in education as an example of the shift from a deficit orientation to an asset orientation. The nation's education system has operated on the assumption that "ability equals achievement." The response has been a massive investment in efforts to remedy deficits in the student rather than deficits in the approach to education. Recent successes in the education of disadvantaged and minority youth show that high expectations, strong preparation, and support systems sensitive to the cultural, familial, and socioeconomic circumstances of the population are prerequisites to success. These principles are valid not only for education. They apply to any human development activity for disadvantaged and minority populations.

An asset orientation for urban change strategies is not new, according to Ramirez. For years, most human development entrepreneurs have spoken of "strengths" as well as "needs." The problem has been that there was an incentive to paint the bleakest picture possible to justify a response. Grant Jones agreed, saying that the more he works in neighborhoods, the more he believes that there are no new ideas, only ideas for the right time, place, and people. People from the neighborhoods understand and embrace an assets approach. The challenge for professionals is figuring out how to use an assets approach to fashion policy and program responses.

Angela Blackwell of Oakland stated that the asset approach may not be new but it feels revolutionary. The Healthy Start Initiative, in Oakland, adopted an asset approach, and the community is coalescing around this issue in ways they never have because "they feel good about talking about what is good about them." Blackwell and Jones agreed that it is critically

important to hear the voices of the people in the neighborhoods and that an asset approach allows those voices to be heard.

Defining an asset

An asset approach begins with the acquisition of information about the context. Stan Hyland noted, as did Ramirez, that one of the most difficult assets to define and inventory is the cultural context for other assets. They believe that one of the weaknesses of McKnight's asset inventory (or capacity mapping) is its emphasis on assets that are easily quantified. In the Orange Mound neighborhood of Memphis, Hyland explained, the first things the community defined were the neighborhood's history and its pride in that history. They did not begin with an inventory of businesses.

Ramirez's experience also suggests that in multicultural urban communities asset inventories must be approached in a culturally congruent manner. To do this, it may be useful to inventory assets and frame responses from three perspectives: individual, family, and the immediate community. One of the most important assets of a community is institutionalized cultural affirmation—public events and rituals that validate a community and its strengths. According to Ramirez, "The presence of culturally appropriate mirrors of a community ensures that children understand they are part of a historical continuum. This gives them a sense of hope and trust in their own initiative."

Maria Carrion of Boston suggested that you have to look at both the assets of a community and at the cultural assets of a group. Groups are at different stages of historical development, and there is uneven development of institutional assets in cultural communities. Some of them are fairly well developed with sophisticated leaders and institutions, while others are not. Carrion explained that you need to look not only at the uneven development, but you should also ask why certain things developed and not others. An example is the Latino media. It is so well developed in the United States not because the Latino community is well developed but because companies could not sell anything advertised in English to the Latino community.

The asset approach may not be new but it feels revolutionary

Implications for programs

In Denver, according to Jones, the emphasis has been on breaking down the insulation of neighborhood residents that prevents them from being heard. Instead of talking to service providers as if they were the spokespersons for the neighborhoods, the Piton Foundation has set up two neighborhood leadership development institutes to develop the voices of neighborhood residents. The institutes address two vital assets—relationships and trust—by in-

Mapping community capacity

Primary Building Blocks

Individual Assets
- Skills, talents, and experiences
- Citizens associations
- Individual businesses
- Home-based enterprises
- Personal income
- Gifts of labeled people

Organizational Assets
- Associations of businesses
- Citizens associations
- Cultural organizations
- Communications organizations
- Religious organizations

Secondary Building Blocks

Private and Nonprofit Organizations
- Higher-education institutions
- Hospitals
- Social service agencies

Public Institutions and Services
- Public schools
- Police
- Libraries
- Fire departments
- Parks

Physical Resources
- Vacant land, commercial and industrial structures, housing
- Energy and waste resources

Potential Building Blocks
- Welfare expenditures
- Public capital improvement expenditures
- Public information

Source: John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann, *Mapping Community Capacity*, (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1990).

creasing citizen participation and strengthening the ability of people in neighborhoods to solve problems and work together. Jones argued that as program operators, public officials, and foundation grant officers, we often ask that neighborhood residents trust that we will act in their best interest. Often, however, we need to show more reciprocity of that trust—that we trust residents to participate in the decisionmaking for their communities.

Some people in the system are not excited about an asset approach because it will change the way money comes into the neighborhoods

Jones believes that one way to organize around assets is to ask what the residents value. Just because a business or church is in the neighborhood doesn't mean it is an asset. Sarah Ford explained that their initiative in Milwaukee is organized so that every stakeholder—whether the residents control the asset or not—sits at the table and the group comes up with joint solutions.

Janis Parks explained that the Baltimore City Family Preservation Initiative began with an inherent belief in the strengths of families and the community. Its goals are to make decisions on an interagency basis and to move decisionmaking to the local level, to serve families in a noncategorical way by having a case worker address the total needs of the family, and to invest not in crisis management but in prevention. In Milwaukee, Ford has found that you can get human service agencies to the table, but that this type of human service system reform is difficult to sell. She believes some people in the system are not excited about an asset approach because it will change the way money comes into the neighborhoods. In the current system, the money goes to the agency rather than the consumer. Ford explained that they want to bring the resources to the people in Milwaukee's neighborhoods, who could then shop around for the best service. Mustafa Abdul-Salaam of New Haven agreed that the human services do not see residents as consumers—rather they dictate what residents need and do not cater to their interests.

Hyland noted that an asset approach also has implications for program evaluation. Although asset analysis has been around for a long time, an academic industry is predicated on deficiency analysis. So, not only does the academic community want to protect jobs but also agencies want to control information. "I'm defining the problems, hence you as neighborhood people are dependent on me," Hyland continued. Agencies want nice, clean baseline data to show program effectiveness. Culture is not baseline data. Culture is stories, culture is heroes, culture is a set of orientations—this does not lend itself to helping someone get ahead in an agency or get reelected. The advocates of assets analysis will be the neighborhood residents. The question becomes, How do we institutionalize an asset approach?

Another question is, How do you sell an asset approach? Ramirez suggested that creative packaging is crucial. In San Antonio, Partnership for Hope's profile of the community was titled "Pride and Poverty." This title juxtaposed the asset with the need, changing the character of the discussion. The challenge is to develop language that is asset-focused, not to romanticize problems. Another challenge is to avoid "creaming" because it is easy to work with people and organizations that have obvious and apparent assets. An asset approach has to look deeper, and this is why it is difficult to describe and sell.

Denver neighborhood leadership development institutes

Mission statement and objectives developed by the residents who were part of planning the Institutes:

The concept of the West Side Neighborhood Leadership Program is built on the notion that indigenous leadership is a key element in the future of our community. The project is designed by and is focused to serve the residents of the West Side neighborhood. The program is built on the assumption that people are our neighborhood's most important resource. The purpose of the leadership program is to do five things:

- To strengthen the neighborhood by developing individual and group problem-solving skills.
- To expand the level of participation by neighborhood residents in the issues of the community.
- To develop skills that will help people in the neighborhoods to speak for themselves.
- To encourage coordination, linkage, and networking among neighborhood residents in initiatives that influence their environment.
- To build a spirit of community and unity.

SESSION 3

Structuring effective community services

Presenter: Audrey Rowe, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Income Maintenance

Moderator: Otis S. Johnson, Executive Director, Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority

Panelists: Angela Glover Blackwell, Executive Director, Urban Strategies Council, Oakland; Don Crary, Executive Director, New Futures for Little Rock Youth; Donna Stark, State Director, Children and Family Services Initiative, Maryland; Carrie Thornhill, President and Project Director, The Committee on Strategies to Reduce Chronic Poverty, Washington, D.C.

Otis Johnson opened this session by stating: "Families are the building blocks of society and its greatest asset.... It is in the best interest of a society to invest in families." Audrey Rowe's presentation looked at this issue of investing in families in the context of recent shifts of responsibility from the federal government to the states and the search for alternative funding and structures for services. Rowe asserted that the recent attention given to urban communities presents us with an "opportunity to infuse some new ideas into state and local governments as they frame strategies and responses." The question becomes how to frame the appropriate response.

Building on family and community strengths

In Connecticut and other states, successful programs build on the strengths of families and communities, empowering them as an integral aspect of program activity. Rowe is working to develop community-based systems that govern the development and delivery of services and that provide and nurture access to them. Rowe has found that this kind of system needs to be flexible, available, and accountable to the population it hopes to serve, and it must base its work on the needs of its clientele. Such a system requires mechanisms whereby the resident can contribute to the development, planning, and delivery of necessary services.

Rowe has also found that by involving and showing fundamental respect for children, families, and community members, successful programs have had a demonstrable impact on the willingness of the hardest-to-reach families to seek services independently. Programs with community involvement also build a cadre of community leaders capable of bringing about change. In communities suffering a loss of cohesion and infrastructure, building a core group of leaders can be as vital a goal as the more immediate need to get basic services to families in need. Indeed, Rowe believes that using service delivery to build community leadership may be a basic condition for successful service delivery.

Johnson explained that one fundamental problem is that we do not have family-centered policies at any level of government. Policies that meet the needs of families would encompass social services, education, housing, recreation, economic development, and so on—all rolled into a family-centered policy. Such a policy would acknowledge that strong families build strong communities and individuals—and that strong communities provide supports for families.

The policy challenge, concurred Art Naparstek, is to develop a policy framework that strengthens communities. Naparstek urged the conference participants to think of the policy implications of strengthening communities. Strengthening communities requires a holistic view of how policy issues are interconnected—family development, health, education, transportation, economic development, and so on. Naparstek believes that the challenge is to see communities as the context for these issues. If we do not, Naparstek fears that other policies, such as vouchers and choice,

"The thing we have to remember is that the loss of cohesion and infrastructure in our communities did not happen yesterday. And we can not resolve the problem before election day. It is going to require rolling up our sleeves and being prepared for a much longer involvement and a much more intensive involvement to restructure community services."

Audrey Rowe

will weaken our cities and further isolate poor neighborhoods.

Structuring an appropriate response

"Collaboration, coordination, and integrated services at the local level for poor families appears to be the new rallying cry of professionals working in human services," Rowe noted. "Interest in this approach is also found within city halls, statehouses, and governors' offices."

Collaboration, far more than coordination, offers the possibility of real and systemic movement toward the creation of integrated, community-based services

An example of a state-sponsored collaborative initiative is the Coordinated Education and Training Opportunities (CETO) grant, being implemented by the State Department of Education in Connecticut. The result of a year of cooperative planning at the state and local level, CETO has a funding structure and planning process to promote local decision-making in the delivery of education and training services to disadvantaged populations. Its framework promotes a comprehensive planning model for the delivery of services through a regional, client-centered system operated through an area collaborative.

The success of the CETO initiative raises questions about the need to move beyond cooperation in devising effective, comprehensive service delivery strategies. Cooperative ventures engage in networking and information sharing to try to match needs with resources. Collaborations, by contrast, establish common goals and mutual agreements for resource allocation—and then plan, implement, and evaluate the joint effort. The advantage of collaborative initiatives is the possibility for restructuring resource allocation, program design, and service delivery. Rowe concluded that collaboration, far more than coordination, offers the possibility of real and systemic movement toward the creation of integrated, community-based services.

Another rallying cry of human service professionals has been decategorization of funds—getting rid of the multiple funding streams for programs that serve families. Donna Stark explained that Maryland has passed legislation that decategorizes all of the home placement dollars for keeping families together—to develop a system of family workers who belong to a community. With flexible dollars, these family workers will have the capacity to respond to the spectrum of needs of the family—not just to one person within a family.

In responding to a question about one-stop shopping centers for family services, Stark argued that the key is developing the technology to provide seamless delivery of services at the community level—not just having disjointed programs lumped together in one location. Esther Bush offered the Urban League of Hartford's GED program as an example of one-stop shopping. The program deals with the total needs of a family—helping a spouse get a job, providing day care, offering emergency grants, and so on. Its success would be even greater if it did not have to deal with multiple funding streams.

Carrie Thornhill also noted that you need to look at the motives behind support for one-stop shopping centers. In D.C., while the objective to provide integrated and comprehensive services is a major concern, the driving force behind one-stop shopping centers is the need to reduce space leased around the city by the D.C. government.

Sid Gardener challenged the panel by asking if they were really in favor of decategorized funding where communities are accountable for outcomes. He believes that many people delivering community services have their lifeline tied to categorical funding and that they may be troubled by having their funding based on outcomes. Stark explained that in Maryland it has become a matter of redefining good outcomes: "I think you are absolutely right that in state governments outcomes have been based on dollars spent, not on impact on families and communities." This kind of redefinition of outcomes is a difficult strategic change for state governments and meets with a lot of resistance and caution. A new definition of outcomes has to be built on trust that a family really can change, that a community can define its own needs, that a local government structure can support a community's interest in change, and that the state government has the responsibility to support all of this.

Don Crary is more in favor of decategorized thinking by service providers—but he believes we are a long way away from that right now. "I have real concern that if we get at the funding first and we still have categorical thinking and problem identification as a way of working

with people in communities, I don't think we will get anywhere. I think there is a process we need to go through to give workers the skills to do family assessments with the family, to respect the family, and to empower the family to help shape what they want to do with their lives and determine how the money gets used." As a first step, states could decategorize funds for programs that take a holistic approach in serving families, such as the GED program in Hartford.

Johnson believes that through true collaboration, we can reach agreement on decategorized funding. When the various parties of a community come together to build a collective vision, they realize that no one agency, group, or individual can get there alone. Agreements can be made to pool resources to reach the vision. And according to Angela Blackwell this process does not have to happen slowly. When a critical mass of people and knowledge comes together at the right time, agreements can be made about problems and answers.

Naparstek offered a caution: there could be two traps in this new notion of multiservice. One is that there are governors and others who will make "political hay over spending a nickel or two on these new services while they cut welfare payments and other programs." The second is the "magic bullet" trap that this newly constructed vision of family services will solve everything. The danger, he believes, is that people in poor urban communities lack fundamental things, such as jobs and safety, that human services agencies may not adequately address.

Johnson and Blackwell agreed with Naparstek that we have to keep our eye on the whole picture—family services, education, jobs, safety, and so on. Blackwell quoting the director of Oakland's health department said, "It wasn't services that got them into poverty, and it won't be services that gets them out of poverty." Rowe noted that state economic development strategies are focused on business development and on job creation for those already in the labor market—they do not see the welfare population and those on other types of assistance as their responsibility. Stark agreed that state agencies lack a sense of joint responsibility for the situations our families are in. Johnson thought that this stemmed from a program focus on individuals instead of families or communities—programs do not address the interconnections in people's lives.

Engaging the stakeholder

Rowe often thinks that the most difficult task in collaborative initiatives is identifying the stakeholders and the real neighborhood leaders who should be at the table—and getting a consensus once you get them to the table. "Potential participants must come to regard the benefits of community-based initiatives as outweighing the perceived advantages of continued autonomy and independence. This shift in perception is crucial to the long-term viability of community-based initiatives," according to Rowe. Collaboration and consensus mean that everyone at the table has to give up something. The real needs of the community can often get lost when the stakeholders fight to stay autonomous.

The most difficult task in collaborative initiatives is identifying the stakeholders and the real neighborhood leaders who should be at the table

Another dilemma, pointed out by Rev. Thompson of Bridgeport, is that there has to be a balance among the stakeholders, especially when there are not enough funds to support the level of services a community needs. When an initiative such as New Futures comes into a community with a budget much higher than the city's human services budget, there is a perceived imbalance of power. Rev. Thompson asserted that in such cases the community may want to have more say in how the initiative's money is spent. Stark also thought it important to ask about upsetting the balance of power in decisionmaking. The program in Maryland is trying for systemic change that puts all the resources into one pot, with all the stakeholders then deciding together what the spending priorities should be.

SESSION 4

Dealing with race and ethnicity in urban change strategies

"Our vision should be of a single, unified, diverse society in which diversity is a value to be respected and encouraged."

Peter Edelman

Presenter: Peter B. Edelman, Professor, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C.

Moderator: James O. Gibson, Director of Equal Opportunity Program, The Rockefeller Foundation

Panelists: Esther Bush, President and Chief Executive Officer, Urban League of Greater Hartford, Inc.; Rose Dwight, Community Educator, Planned Parenthood, Dayton; Frieda Garcia, Executive Director, United South End Settlements, Boston; Choco Gonzalez Meza, Executive Director, Partnership for Hope, San Antonio

"Our willingness now to directly address racial issues is a healthy departure from the past. Understanding and respecting race and ethnicity are absolutely critical in all of the work that we do." So established Jim Gibson as he opened the fourth session of the conference. Peter Edelman highlighted several themes from his paper underscoring that integration and celebration of ethnic and racial history should coexist, operative racism has not been legislated out of existence, racism must once again become part of public discourse, and coalitions for community change should be cross-disciplinary and multiethnic.

Reframing the discussion on poverty

Edelman's paper emphasized the need to do more about telling the American people the facts about race, poverty, and racism. He argued that we need to frame the discussion on poverty and urban change strategies in the broadest possible terms. At the same time, we need to put the discussion of racism back into our public debate.

Rose Dwight commented on the perception that the poor tend to live in the inner city and that they disproportionately tend to be people of color. She noted that through her own experience as an Appalachian growing up in West Virginia and moving to a midwestern city, she has seen poverty conditions experienced by many white urban Appalachians, a group little known to the American public. Dwight stated that the majority of the approximately 5 million Appalachians that migrated to urban areas between 1940 and 1970 have achieved economic success. But about 30 percent of the Appalachians in midwestern cities like Cincinnati and Chicago are languishing.

Ronald Mincy of the Urban Institute echoed Dwight's concern that the discussion of poverty is too frequently framed as a minority and urban issue. Because of that, Americans are subject to cultural and racial explanations for poverty and social distress. He stressed that foundation-sponsored research should not overlook groups like Appalachians and must let people know that there are poor and socially distressed white people. The poverty and social distress in large cities have to be linked with poverty in small cities and in rural areas to illustrate how pervasive are structural forces that buffet low-skilled people.

Connecting cities and suburbs

In the effort to reframe the discussion on poverty, Edelman posed the question: Can we get suburban support for an urban change agenda? While conceding that this is a difficult question and not an easy sell, Edelman suggested ways to get support as a political matter. The first is to package messages that appeal to the self-interest of suburbanites—such as the promotion of economic growth and tax fairness—and second to educate suburbanites about how America needs the best from all its people to be productive and competitive in today's global economy.

Alice O'Connor of the Social Science Research Council speculated that anyone in New York City on the Friday after the Rodney King verdict would not have held much hope for this strategy. She described how suburban professionals abandoned the city at midday, frightened by rumors of an impending riot—rumors that encompassed blatant racial and class stereotypes. She asked Edelman to offer concrete strategies for building coalitions with suburbanites, and inquired about whether new strategies to reduce segregation should be developed or whether older strategies should be invigorated in an effort to promote integration.

Edelman responded to the first question by admitting that he had no solutions, adding that working with central-city populations has ceased to be a part of the nation's political agenda. The only way that poverty issues can now be addressed is by packaging them as part of larger issues. He suggested that detached suburbanites may begin to see that their long-term interests are better served by remaining connected to inner-city people and issues. Edelman also noted that the Supreme Court has cut off most metropolitan desegregation strategies involving litigation. He suggested that the kind of work being done by the Fair Employment Council offered a new form of integration strategy by addressing the question of discrimination in the workplace.

Esther Bush asserted that cities and suburbs have no choice but to work together to resolve urban problems. She mentioned that suburbanites and city dwellers in the Hartford area have a common interest in maintaining a vibrant downtown. Bush also mentioned that she has heard less discussion lately about integration and more about ensuring equal resources within segregated communities. "People are starting to feel okay that some schools are all black, provided they have the exact same resources as the white schools. Nothing gave me a stronger cultural base than going to [historically black] Morgan State University. People should have the option to send their children to all types of schools, and each community should pursue its own solutions."

Art Naparstek of Cleveland added that when dealing with issues of pluralism and diversity, communities should identify local issues and seek out state and national solutions. He suggested that community activists and policymakers could learn from the civil rights movement, when local problems were identified—black people couldn't eat at certain lunch counters, couldn't vote in certain precincts—and national solutions were sought.

Supporting urban economic development

In examining community development strategies, Bush argued that the phenomenon of racism in America must be thoroughly explored because it deals not only with discrimination but also with the distribution of power and control of resources. She advised that advocates and activists keep this power dynamic in mind when developing programs and policies.

When dealing with issues of pluralism and diversity, communities should identify local issues and seek out state and national solutions

Mincy agreed that Bush had defined an important issue—racism is about power. He further asserted that serious deliberations about poverty must consider minority economic development, a subject that had been little discussed during the conference. Mincy insisted that academics, activists, and policymakers are fighting a losing battle if the only way they will engage in a process of economic development is through a public-sector, human services orientation.

He reminded the group of William Julius Wilson's keynote address that examined the implications of "a new discrimination." Wilson described a set of employment outcomes wherein young blacks, males in particular, were discriminated against not exclusively because of their race but because they displayed workplace behaviors that employers found unacceptable. Mincy added that other studies have shown that some employers recruit Mexican and Puerto Rican workers to replace black workers. Therefore, he argued that race-neutral strategies designed to stimulate aggregate demand—strategies intended to encourage employers to hire more workers—will not help enough blacks achieve success in the workplace.

However, Edelman argued, we need to continue to pursue antidiscrimination efforts. People should have real options about where they live, work, and go to school. Edelman agreed that an urban agenda should include

neighborhood-specific policies, but we also need broad integrative policies. Policies that can create viable inner-city communities are the same policies that give people the wherewithal to make real choices.

Ronald Homer reinforced Mincy's comments and added a related anecdote. Homer recounted that several years ago while he was visiting Jerusalem, a Jewish friend explained to him just how important the state of Israel is to Jews around the world. In the height of emotion, his friend declared, "Ron, you have to understand our need for our own nation, our own military, our own place where we can be Jews. Otherwise we'll be just like you black people." Homer said that comment really struck home because, Homer conceded, "he was right."

Professional and middle-income blacks must seek more avenues to interact with nonprofessional and low-skilled blacks, particularly youths

Homer insisted that "African American professionals embrace black urban communities as our own Israels" and that all African Americans should respond to and interact with these communities the way that Jews respond to Israel. He concluded that black Americans should value government programs, foundation support, and private enterprise in black communities to the degree they empower African Americans as they strengthen their own communities.

Angela Blackwell of Oakland added that African American professionals need to look seriously at neglected commercial strips in black communities and plan to replace the abandoned storefronts with a variety of businesses. Blackwell cited research indicating that 33 percent of the businesses launched in middle-income commercial corridors routinely fail. Yet only 15 percent of the businesses in economically blighted areas founder, indicating a good potential source of economic power for inner-city neighborhoods. Furthermore, according to Mincy, small business is the biggest employment growth sector, and minority-owned small businesses tend to employ minority workers. Minority economic development is critical to the employment of more young black workers, Mincy concluded.

Uniting professional and poor urban youth

Bush noted that many middle-class African Americans have moved away from largely black urban areas and have placed their children in private schools. She emphasized that the growing classism within the African American community should be addressed through redoubled efforts from black professionals to reach out to non-professional black youth and families. Bush maintained that peer pressure from other poor people and fear of success combine to keep people clinging to poverty because it is familiar. Black professionals can play a major part in breaking that cycle.

Mincy agreed that professional and middle-income blacks must seek more avenues to interact with nonprofessional and low-skilled blacks, particularly youths. He explained that informal tutelage in proper workplace behavior, job networking, and other sharing of "soft" workplace skills used to occur in black communities before they became segregated along class lines. But now, Mincy maintained, professional and employed blacks are decreasingly perceived as mentors and increasingly functioning as the custodians of nonprofessional and low-skilled blacks. Mincy illustrated that this occurs in the juvenile justice system, in which blacks are employed as district attorneys locking up black youths; in the educational system, in which blacks are employed as teachers, often ashamed of what black youths are doing and unable to relate to them. Choco Meza disclosed that in some Hispanic communities we also see professionals moving out, leaving poor, nonskilled youths with a lack of role models.

Increasing personal interaction across racial and class boundaries

An important lesson for any initiative in neighborhood development, according to Edelman, is inclusiveness. Echoing Audrey Rowe's paper, Edelman suggested that to achieve broad-based support you have to build multiethnic coalitions. A critical question, as suggested by Rowe, is identifying who should be at the table. And once you get to the table, how you obtain consensus.

To highlight one city's approach to exploring racial and ethnic issues, Frieda Garcia described the work of the Boston Persistent Poverty Project. Garcia recounted that the Project convened 43 individuals representing economic and ethnic diversity, and expertise

and leadership in the problem solving. Project activities included group retreats and other opportunities for group members to get to know each other. During the sometimes painful sessions involving close personal conversations, it became clear that many had experienced poverty and racism. Garcia related that through this sharing "the boxes we put around ourselves and others began to fall away." Additionally, a series of roundtables centered on different ethnic groups, and a series of focus groups targeted specifically to poor people were conducted to gather information about the differences and similarities among groups experiencing poverty.

Garcia recounted that during the weekend following the disturbances in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict, many rallies and meetings were held in Boston. Garcia was struck by how these rallies and meetings reflected of the city's different ethnic groups. Representatives from Boston's Asian, Hispanic, black, and white communities seemed to share a greater consciousness that poverty problems cut across ethnic groups, although some groups feel and experience poverty issues more acutely. Garcia suggested that in some measure this awareness was a result of the Boston Persistent Poverty Project's work over the previous year.

Chance Brown of the Ford Foundation discussed prevailing attitudes about young African American males. From his perspective as a member of that group he has recognized an "industry" in academia specializing in negative research on the problems of African American males, but asserted that asset-based research is definitely the way to go. He described meetings he had conducted with young black and Latino high school students about their educational and life choices. Brown noted that although many of these students wore clothing and had mannerisms that threatened mainstream society, they expressed sincere interest in scholastic achievement and want success for themselves.

Brown emphasized the importance of constant interaction to change perceptions of people perceived as different. He argued that negative images of young black males should be confronted and demystified to give these youth stronger self-regard and to help activists and policymakers better articulate their issues to colleagues.

Dwight agreed that stereotypes remain a substantial problem, compounded by simplistic media images that help form children's perceptions of other people. She lamented that the stigma attached to being an Appalachian—often portrayed by media as clownish hillbillies—makes it difficult for Appalachians to celebrate their diversity.

Stereotypes remain a substantial problem, compounded by simplistic media images that help form children's perceptions of other people

Addressing interethnic conflict

Meza spoke about the disturbing reality that racial and ethnic minorities are not free of racist behavior, despite the pain they have experienced as victims of racism. She recalled the intense conflict between African Americans and Koreans during the disturbances in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict and recommended that as people of color work to create racial sensitivity within society at large, they also work within and across minority communities. Meza argued that integrated coalitions based on respect and understanding can work: "I have seen them in action."

Mincy affirmed Meza's point about interethnic conflict as a critical matter to be addressed. He added, however, that blacks within their own racial group and Hispanics within their own ethnic group must begin to negotiate for themselves the terms of their upward mobility. "Whites who want to be a part of that should extend to us the courtesy and opportunity to work out our own strategies before we bring them to the table," Mincy concluded.

"Schools are an important part of any strategy to improve the experience and life chances of children in situations that place them at risk."

Ralph Smith

SESSION 5

Toward community-responsive schools

Presenter: Ralph R. Smith, President, Philadelphia Children's Network

Moderator: Ron Register, Project Director, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis

Panelists: Cesar Batalla, President, Puerto Rican Coalition, Bridegeport; Elaine Berman, Co-Director, The Piton Foundation Poverty Project, Denver; Ruthie Bush Mathews, School Board Chair, Hartford Public Schools

Schools are an indispensable component of any strategy for urban change, often providing the sole institutional contact for families who may have no other connections, argued Ralph Smith. The panel discussion, moderated by Ron Register, reviewed Smith's paper, cowritten by Michelle Fine, identifying obstacles to and strategies for reforming school systems and developing community-responsive schools.

Teaching elephants to dance

Although Smith has consulted on education issues for public agencies across the country, he emphasized that he is in, but not of, the school system. Professing a deep respect for teachers and an equally deep distrust of education bureaucracies, Smith suggested that the unwritten compact between schools and the communities they serve is founded on mutually low expectations. To strengthen the relationship between schools and communities, he proposed that communities improve youngsters' school readiness by providing stronger family support and child development services.

Smith encouraged parents and community activists to push for a "strategic engagement" with the education system. He proposed that the elements of such an engagement include:

- Forging an alliance with insiders.
- Anchoring local educational improvement processes in a national framework such as the national education goals set forth in "America 2000," the nine points of the National Business Roundtable, the recommendations from the National Commission on Children, and the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills.
- Accepting the challenge posed by America 2000 and holding the president accountable to his education strategy.
- Assisting children to become school-ready, and creating schools and caring communities for all children and families.
- Creating a safety net of comprehensive services, including school-based and school-linked programs.
- Investigating the feasibility of establishing an initiative to obtain a radically decentralized, transformed system of governance for public education.

He suggested that large, hierarchical school bureaucracies no longer work to educate children. These systems are often more responsive to political issues than to education issues. "Our task," he proposed, "is like teaching an elephant to dance. Trained elephants are instructed from birth to stay within an accepted circle. Our school districts are like those elephants. We have to break their circles. We need to teach them to wander."

Revolution or reform?

Maria Carrion of Boston alleged that the crisis in public education exemplifies the intersection of many other issues discussed during the conference—the divergence between the haves and the have-nots, conflicting interests of culturally diverse populations, and power and control over resources. She stated that she was uncomfortable with the notion that communities should advance school reform. Instead, declared Carrion, communities need a revolution that will bring them into a new age. She proposed that demographic and technological revolutions occurring in American soci-

ety have overwhelmed schools and families, which are often viewed as dysfunctional.

Smith replied that radical restructuring is needed. He stated that there are examples of how to produce good community-responsive schools. But the next step is to create school systems that can nurture, sustain, and replicate the school successes that are currently the exception rather than the rule. He observed that school districts are often dragged into reform efforts by mandate or through financial incentives, but they escape once the mandate or money runs out. Then they proceed to undermine the reform.

Smith shared his view that central bureaucracies are no longer needed for purposes of education. He suggested that decentralized management, school-based and anchored in parents and communities, could provide a more appropriate strategy to improve education. A dilemma, however, is that during the process of reform, communities must work with the same bureaucrats who must be unseated if schools are to be transformed.

Ruthie Mathews added that reform involves changing the culture of school systems and the way that people think about educating children. This culture change, Mathews declared, can't happen overnight.

Mike Suntag, a public school employee from Bridgeport, joked that, "Revolution for school people means changing the date of graduation night." He upheld his view that a public school revolution should not entail outright abandonment of the schools, but a push for change within existing school systems. Suggesting that top-down mandates rarely work, Suntag argued that imposing deadlines for developing site-based management teams is unfair—teachers and parents can't just change roles overnight. However, Cesar Batalla, a community activist and cofounder of the Bridgeport Futures Initiative, insisted that mandates can work and in some instances are needed to get leadership moving.

Parent power

Mustafa Abdul-Salaam of New Haven shared with the group his belief that parenting his three children is his most significant activity. As the president for the citywide Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in New Haven, he has observed the PTO's impact on policy at the school level and the city level. Abdul-Salaam proposed that parents must organize to keep school systems and local governments more accountable to their consumers—the parents. Parents, he asserted, should spearhead bottom-up reform efforts.

Batalla added that the Bridgeport Futures Initiative attempts to help parents do just that. Noting that in school reform efforts, the parents' agenda typically comes last, Batalla mentioned some of the objectives of the Initiative's parent-involvement strategy: to increase neighborhood safety, to become more politically active, to hold board of education members accountable, to have parents and community residents identify resources to meet their needs, and to increase parents' overall empowerment. Karl Walden from Bridgeport added that communities should encourage a continuum of parent involvement in education—from preschool through high school.

Mathews mentioned that school boards can play an important role as advocates for parental involvement. She described the student and parental participation in the Hartford School Board's strategic planning process, remarking that their concerns over health and counseling issues were incorporated into the plan. She remarked that the board has been able to involve parents by going to them, not expecting them to come to the board.

Smith pointed out that Head Start also provides an excellent example of parental involvement. Programs are required to enable parents to take part in Head Start as volunteers through classroom interaction, as well as participation in program governance. Unfortunately, Smith commented, many parents who prove themselves competent through Head Start are suddenly shut out when their kids move into regular schools.

Angela Blackwell of Oakland also cited Head Start as a wonderful example of parental involvement. But Blackwell claimed that the recent expansions in Head Start funding are also a classic illustration of the gulf between the federal government's policies and local communities' needs. In Oakland, Head Start funds have been augmented to serve more four-year-olds, despite Oakland's request for additional funds for one- to three-year-olds. She appealed to conference partici-

Decentralized management, school-based and anchored in parents and communities, could provide a more appropriate strategy to improve education

pants to organize and proclaim loudly about what local experience reveals. In that way, when national policies are created, they will fit local community needs.

Less central bureaucracy, more community

School sites must have authority, autonomy, stability and resources, which central districts are loathe to give up

Register asked why there seems to have been a move toward school system decentralization. In response, Elaine Berman described Denver's school reform efforts led by Colorado's governor, Roy Romer. The reform came out of a bitter contract dispute between the school administration and teachers union. Governor Romer intervened to end the dispute and created a contract that incorporated much more decentralization than either side had previously considered. A key component in the contract is the Collaborative Decision Making teams (CDMs), including teachers, parents, community business people, and non-teaching school staff. Berman reported that the CDMs have focused most of their attention on process issues and will soon move the conversation on to improving education outcomes for children in the schools.

Smith emphasized that for site-based management to be "more than just another shell game," some entity must take responsibility for the full education of children. Schools and communities have to move children into adulthood, preparing them for college and work. Smith asserted that school sites must have authority, autonomy, stability and resources, which central districts are loathe to give up. But without these, site-based management becomes just another way of putting all of the complex triage-like decisions on the shoulders of people who have no capacity to deliver significantly improved education for children.

Choice in education

Ron Mincy of the Urban Institute asked why the concept of "choice" had not been addressed during discussion on education reform. He expressed his view that enabling parents to choose where to send their children to school seems to be the best way to make the system responsive to parents as consumers. Within a choice framework, he asserted, if schools did not improve, they would lose enrollments and resources.

Smith responded that "choice" is a political concept that seems hard to refuse, adding that he believes in choice in virtually everything, including choice in education. But choice, Smith maintained, is not a good strategy to reform or improve education because it assumes that the market is a truly effective way to allocate public goods. He offered the example of America's health care system as one that offers choice, yet miserably fails poor people.

Smith proposed that the real choice each family should have is the option to send their children to schools in their own neighborhoods without having to compromise educational quality or safety. He stated that "choice," as it's presently conceived, promises to increase the isolation and abandonment of poor children. But Smith agreed that he would support a scenario in which a $7,000 voucher were available for every person receiving public assistance and every person who is eligible for Chapter One, so that the poorest people in this society could afford to exercise the same choice as everyone else.

He concluded that parents choose schools based on comfort, ideology, proximity, convenience, safety, and a range of other factors, including the quality of education. This wide range of criteria involved in such decisions makes it difficult to conclude that parental choice will necessarily improve education.

Within the context of choice, Berman described an effort in Colorado to develop an independent public school district, in which an individual school—including the parents, teachers, and administrators—could elect to leave its school district and become part of the overall public school system in Colorado. Berman reported that the first year this legislation was introduced, it passed in the state house of representatives, but failed in the senate. She predicted, however, that more states would adopt this strategy.

Mathews commented on the issue of choice by describing a 20-year-old program in Hartford's public school system. Through Project Concern, Hartford parents can elect to send their children to schools in the suburbs. However, these children do not achieve any more academically than kids in the Hartford public schools.

School desegregation

Toward the end of the session, Register noted that segregation had not been addressed during the discussion. Berman reported that in Denver, after 20 years of support for busing and desegregation, the school board, the city administration, and Hispanic and black leadership groups have unanimously decided to try to free themselves from the mandates of the desegregation court order. Their school desegregation efforts not only failed to improve Denver students' academic performance, but achievement has actually decreased substantially. Berman recounted that 20 years ago Denver's school district served 90,000 kids, 60 percent of whom were white. Today the district serves 60,000 children, 30 percent of whom are white. There has been massive white and middle-class flight to the suburbs.

Berman predicted that if and when Denver releases itself from the court order, the community will not return to segregated schooling. She speculated that some students would still be bused, but not under tight restrictions that the current court order requires. There is considerable initiative in Denver to integrate housing as an alternative to busing.

Integrate housing as an alternative to busing

A dialogue with the foundations

Moderator: Ann Rosewater, Conference Facilitator

Panelists: Ira Cutler, Associate Director, The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Prue Brown, Deputy Director, Urban Poverty Program, The Ford Foundation; James O. Gibson, Director of Equal Opportunity Program, The Rockefeller Foundation

Foundation documents written in the 1960s are remarkably similar to papers and staff debates on urban poverty developing today

The luncheon dialogue between conference participants and the officers of the Ford, Rockefeller, and Annie E. Casey Foundations provided an opportunity for participants to solicit the officers' perspectives on the impact and future plans for their foundations' multisite initiatives. Ann Rosewater launched the session with several general questions for the panelists, then fielded questions from conference participants.

Consider the history and values that the Ford, Rockefeller, and Casey Foundations bring to their roles in creating change. Then describe how your initiative—the Neighborhood and Family Initiative, Community Planning and Action Program, or New Futures Initiative—fits into the larger vision for your foundation.

In response, Prue Brown contemplated the many roles that national foundations can play in influencing social change, suggesting that they can help get controversial issues on the national policy agenda, create or build institutions that become advocates for change, test new change strategies and develop new knowledge that informs the change process, develop the infrastructure and leadership in a field to accelerate its development, attempt to influence public attitudes, and inform the policymaking process. Since the Grey Areas program in the 1960s, the Ford Foundation has played these roles in its work on issues of urban poverty with varying degrees of success.

The language used and principles embodied in foundation documents written in the 1960s are remarkably similar to papers and staff debates on urban poverty developing today. This is troubling, commented Brown, because 30 years later urban poverty has become more persistent and concentrated but, unlike the 1960s, there is no reservoir of federal funds to apply to urban problems. She asserted that national foundations need to think strategically about how to use their modest resources to work on social change issues. This has become a difficult strategic question because their role in helping the federal government design and evaluate programs intended to reduce poverty has diminished.

Brown then cited four significant ways in which national foundations' approaches to reducing urban poverty have shifted since the 1960s:

- After decades of supporting categorical and fragmented programmatic interventions, foundations have embraced the need to work holistically with individuals, families, and neighborhoods.
- An increasing number of foundation initiatives require collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit sectors, national and community foundations, neighborhood residents, and government officials to ensure that urban change initiatives launched today will be around tomorrow. Federally driven and funded programs introduced in the 1960s involved no other players, which made them extremely vulnerable to termination.
- The level of public concern about and hope for the conditions of urban poor people has greatly diminished since the 1960s. National foundations now find themselves trying to inspire hope by mounting successful demonstrations in selected sites.
- Foundations have begun to foster experimental participatory structures like the collaboratives in the Neighborhood and Family Initiative to create community voice and control.

Jim Gibson agreed with Brown's observations, adding that a national foundation has the capacity to mobilize large-scale research

and provide a framework in which a variety of people from local contexts share perspectives and exchange information. It can also attempt to influence public opinion by helping to shape general information available to the public. He recalled that this became a critical role for foundations during the mid 1980s when the ideological right controlled the definition and policy interpretations of poverty issues.

Gibson stated that the two major concerns of Rockefeller's Equal Opportunity Program are protecting basic rights by supporting civil rights litigation and advocacy and public policy analysis concerning the conditions and trends affecting minorities, and identifying and addressing phenomena in the minority community that are not responsive to purely race-oriented strategies.

He reported that the activities of the Equal Opportunity Program have been organized in several related areas. One area, designated "Building Understanding of Persistent Poverty," constitutes an investment in research and policy analysis. Researchers at the Social Science Research Council and in other academic institutions have worked across disciplinary lines to interpret complex race and poverty-related issues. Washington-based organizations concerned with the policy interests of minority groups and those living in urban poverty conditions have then funneled the findings from this research into decisionmaking streams by educating media professionals and program and policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels.

The Community Planning and Action Program, currently operating in six cities, makes up another component of the Equal Opportunity Program. This program was developed according to the premise that any program distributing resources to and affecting families should be conducted within a community context. Gibson emphasized the Rockefeller Foundation's commitment to demonstration research and advocacy activities to generate insights about what works in job training, education techniques, and other areas.

A third strand of the Equal Opportunity Program invests in organizations like the Children's Defense Fund to enhance general education around programs that successfully assist children and families and to influence related public policies.

Gibson noted that his past job experiences as a local government official and a local foundation executive have shown him the need for local urban organizations to connect with national partners like national foundations. Most local governments and foundations cannot invest in long-term research and focus instead on advocacy and service delivery. He suggested that the Ford, Rockefeller, and Casey projects represent the best of local initiative taking in connection with what national foundations have to offer—an institutional set of relationships and the staff capability to sponsor and manage long-term expensive, complex research on urban issues.

Ira Cutler responded to the opening question by remarking that the Annie E. Casey Foundation, formed in 1948, had, until recently, used its resources to support direct long-term foster care services. Jim Casey, the founder of United Parcel Service and the Casey Foundation, believed the provision of stable home care would be a valuable investment of his resources. After Casey's death in the mid 1980s, the foundation trustees made a strategic decision to spend the foundation's resources to influence public policy and take a more indirect role rather than a direct services role. To illustrate the reasoning behind this decision, Cutler offered a dramatic example: If the entire resources of the Casey Foundation were distributed directly to 10 percent of Ohio's AFDC families, they would be sufficient to raise the income level of these families to the median income of the United States for only one year, no more. And, he pointed out, these families would also lose all of their Medicaid coverage.

The New Futures Initiative and the Child Welfare Reform Initiative were the first two examples of the Casey Foundation carrying out strategic social policy ventures. In New Futures, a few cities were selected and city leaders were asked to organize themselves into a collaborative and engage in a planning and activity effort that would address dropout, teen pregnancy, and youth employment problems. For the Child Welfare Initiatives in Maryland and North Dakota, the foundation requested that similar governance structures be formed to reach the goal of becoming more supportive of preserving families.

Cutler related that in both major initiatives, the Casey Foundation has experienced

A national foundation has the capacity to mobilize large-scale research and provide a framework in which a variety of people from local contexts share perspectives and exchange information

difficulty organizing communities in a way that seeks to change systems. Foundation officials have learned that there is tremendous momentum, manifested in laws and personal vested interests, to maintain current people-serving systems.

Recognizing that all of these initiatives are still in progress, at different points of maturity, with different design elements, are there any lessons that can be shared?

There has been a tremendous tension between competing forces—people and institutions concerned with maintaining current social systems and people interested in radical changes

Cutler acknowledged that there has been a tremendous tension between competing forces—people and institutions concerned with maintaining current social systems and people interested in radical changes. For example, New Futures' planners thought it would be a good idea to bring together people who control the resources and policymaking authority in the communities. Others argued that those were the worst people to gather together because of their vested interests in current systems—why would they want to change them? Yet Cutler posed that the opposite scenario—convening completely powerless people and asking them to change social systems—is no more logical. The ongoing challenge for the Casey Foundation has been to maintain an initiative that involves people who currently have the control over people-serving systems, so that they don't sabotage the reform effort, but not giving them so much control that the reform effort becomes ineffectual.

Gibson responded that a primary lesson for him has been that national foundations don't have the answers to the problems in American society. Therefore, the most profitable investment of foundation resources is in processes that facilitate people seeking answers, as opposed to funding some proposed silver bullet. Investing in processes sometimes proves risky, because processes don't always yield instantaneous results and working in collaborative ventures with multiple community interests can be frustrating. Yet Gibson concluded that this seems the best way for foundations to influence urban change because they just don't have an abundance of ready-made solutions lined up for distribution.

Brown underscored Gibson's comments, adding that the foundation culture is one that wants to see results. She said that she encourages foundation colleagues to view the Neighborhood and Family Initiative as a long-term undertaking and to resist any undue pressure for immediate results that may undermine the venture.

Many of the lessons being raised deal with shifting relationships between the foundations and their grantees, with whom you all interact very closely. Are you giving something up by empowering them?

Gibson observed that the novel relationships that sometimes develop between the foundation officials and grantees requires foundation officials to exercise a remarkable degree of discretion. In a related comment he mentioned that a benefit of foundation work is trial and error without condemnation. In government, if an experimental program, policy, or relationship doesn't work, you get punished.

The rioting in Los Angeles could have been predicted based on research findings that we've had for many years showing the need for increased services. Yet it seems the only way to get people to pay attention to these research findings is to burn up our cities. When will the foundations move to being proactive rather than reactive?

Cutler offered a perception that research is valuable in justifying the continued existence or expansion of programs, for example, Head Start. But, he maintained, research results rarely inspire Congress or a state legislature to appropriate money. Cutler contended that the most proactive role for the foundations and their initiatives is to continue to provide examples of successful local-level urban change activities that can spread from one community to another. Because, he concluded, it doesn't seem as though there's going to be a national policy supporting fundamental urban change.

Foundations have money, resources, research, and documentation about which social services make a difference. So why don't foundations collectively approach the federal government to make some changes?

Gibson answered that the opportunities to talk with and influence federal government

are extremely limited and remarked that the perception of the foundations' power was greater than their actual force. If anything, Gibson declared, the foundations are suspect in the eyes of federal government officials because they fund advocates that castigate and sometimes even sue them. He reiterated that he views foundations as institutions that help build capacity within society, not as institutions that attempt to be all-powerful and influential in and of themselves.

What next steps will be taken with these foundation initiatives based on your experiences with them? And how do these initiatives fit in the larger foundation programs?

Gibson replied that a next step he envisions is expanded networking among cities that are experimenting with approaches to social change. He explained that because the activities occurring across local communities are so decentralized, many people may not perceive that they are part of something larger. These activities and the people involved in them should coalesce to place urban issues at the center of the national policy agenda. The relevance of local communities joining forces to effect national change has been made very clear, according to Gibson.

If foundations are really serious about moving toward a more comprehensive, flexible, assets-oriented approach, funding is going to have to change. Many of us are required to collaborate with others in our communities to work more holistically, yet funding is still categorically targeted to specific issues in the same geographic area. This increase in collaborative activity means that we spend all of our time going to meetings!

Many knowing nods from conference participants greeted this question. Cutler responded that he has been encouraged to see in some of the cities in which New Futures operates the ability of one structure to serve multiple purposes. Some of the collaboratives are being collapsed into single, collaborative community decisionmaking bodies that are addressing multiple, interlinked problems, cutting down on the need to have multiple collaboratives or a coordinating body for the collaboratives.

Although some foundation staffers may hold progressive social views, many social activists see national foundations as part of "the Establishment." Foundation trustees are the same people who are profiting from the perpetuation of this nation's economic and social systems, yet program officers and grantees continue to talk about using these foundations as instruments of social change. When the real change begins to come and the trustees of these foundations realize that their exalted places may be threatened, how much continued support can local-level change agents expect from these foundations?

Gibson acknowledged the concern, and pointed out that most of the money appropriated by foundations goes to museums, colleges, and hospitals—not to projects focused on social change. Brown noted that philanthropy, like other fields, is more differentiated than the question presupposes. Trustees' views on social change depend on many factors such as the foundation's mission, staff's ability to make a good case for social change strategies in light of the mission, and the diversity of the trustees.

The perception of the foundations' power was greater than their actual force

Conference Papers

PAPER 1

Neighborhoods as an entry point for change

Ronald Shiffman

When we seek a definition of "neighborhood," I believe we must be flexible and allow for neighborhoods to be self-defining and self-identifying

Defining the term "neighborhood" is fraught with difficulties and dangers. The desire to have a clear definition quickly leads one to describe, or attempt to describe, what constitutes a good neighborhood. History has clearly demonstrated the failures of this approach.

All of us can cite neighborhoods in the process of dramatic decline that contain all the assets that one ascribes to a healthy community—parks, schools, infrastructure, and so on (the Crotona Park Area of the Bronx). We can also identify areas that have few if any of these amenities and yet exhibit a great deal of vitality (the Northside in Brooklyn, Soho in New York, and Boston's West End as described by Herb Gans in *The Urban Villagers* [1962]). So, when we seek a definition of "neighborhood," I believe we must be flexible and allow for neighborhoods to be self-defining and self-identifying. Gans argues that neighborhoods, whether defined by place or social organization, differ in their appearance and social character—and in the importance they play in the lives of the people who live in them: "As a neighborhood is more than an ecological or statistical construct, some of its qualities can perhaps be captured only on paper by the sociologically inclined poet or artist."

The definition of a neighborhood is often the result of a mutual agreement between those outside it and those in it. The definition is often enhanced by natural or built barriers that form boundaries and give the neighborhood an identity as a "place." This idea that neighborhoods have an identity is also difficult to delineate. As my City Planning Commission colleague Amanda Burden recently said, "neighborhoods are very much like pornography; they are impossible to define, but when you see them you know what they are." Larry Bourne tackles the question this way: "What do we mean by community and neighborhood? A community has been described as an economic unit, a polity, a formal social system, a geographic unit of territory, or as a society on its own. Each definition, of course, was put forward with a different purpose in mind, and each has some validity. But there is no general agreement on definitions.... Communities in general are as varied as the characteristics of the urban population they house. Greater contrasts may in fact exist between neighborhoods within the same urban area than between cities in different cultures."

Other characteristics often cited are cohesiveness and attachment to neighbors, local institutions, and traditions to the exclusion of other people, institutions, and traditions. As Lou Winnick, paraphrasing Charles Abrams, said: "a neighborhood is defined by the line that, if crossed, you get beat up." Others describe neighborhoods as "that geography that people feel a sense of control over, and as they move from its center to its periphery begin to sense a loss of control," or an area where an "ascribed grouping and its members are joined in a common plight whether or not they like it and where they often 'share a common fate' at the hands of others."

Jane Jacobs recognizes the characteristics described above and sets them in a useful context when she writes: "A successful city neighborhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them. An unsuccessful neighborhood is overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them." This definition underscores the crucial role that neighborhoods can and must play as an entry point for progressive social and economic change. It points out that change is the result of an interplay between micro and macro forces within our society.

Neighborhoods as entry points for change—a macro view

In the context of an entry point for change, the neighborhood is "the arena where individuals

and families live and also where larger forces and policies—investment, development, education, service delivery, socialization—are played out." This theme is critically important today, when as a nation we must once again forge a domestic agenda.

The need to develop positive change strategies in the neighborhood, or workplace, is as important today as it was in the 1930s and 1960s. The lessons from those periods should not be forgotten or dismissed. Self-determination, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency are laudable and desirable goals that have survived political and economic oppression over the ages. But communities cannot be truly self-sufficient and self-reliant unless they develop the organizational and political capacity—individually and collectively—to make local, regional, and national governments responsive and accountable to the needs of local residents and their communities. We cannot afford to shift that responsibility from governments to the neighborhood, the family, the individual, or, for that matter, to a "for-profit" or "not-for-profit" corporation.

Clearly we need a better understanding of the responsibilities and obligations that the individual, family, neighborhood, and government have to each other. A definition of these responsibilities, including the benefits inherent in them, can emerge once all the parties have the capacity to hold each other accountable. The problem is that low-income individuals, families, neighborhoods, and cities have not exercised their power to hold state and federal governments accountable. So the resources and programmatic initiatives needed to address issues of concern to neighborhood residents are virtually nonexistent.

The danger is serving objectives that harm neighborhoods and the people we purport to represent. Arguments for "self-sufficiency" and "self-reliance" are used by reactionaries to argue that governments should not engage in programs that address problems of neighborhoods and the poor. It is ironic that the same crowd that wants to shift the burden and blame to the victims of structural and societal inequities also espouses policies—such as abrogating the right to choose—that deny control of our personal and individual freedoms. When we talk of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and empowerment, we must be clear that these concepts do not conflict with, and indeed depend on, government responsibility to address fundamental, structural social, political, and economic inequities in our society.

Empowerment of neighborhoods, the poor, and other disenfranchised populations means enabling them to make informed choices among viable alternatives—and to have the political and economic ability of realizing those choices. This can't be done in a vacuum. It depends on a domestic policy that recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the private sector and of each tier of the public sector, including local, state, and federal governments as well as the neighborhood and community—however they choose to define themselves.

Neighborhood-based organizing strategies

In seeking positive change, we must understand and develop community and neighborhood-based organizing strategies. The neighborhood is one of several important intervention points from which social, political, and economic change can be initiated. Others are related to but distinct from neighborhoods, such as church, workplace, and constituent-based—organized by gender, religious, ethnic, or racial group.

All are locally based organizing strategies, but, too often, progressive groups view local organizing and development efforts as a diversion from the more important task of national organizing efforts, or as a threat to development projects that target specific local needs. Conservatives often see organizing as a way of internalizing the debate within the neighborhood and community. They focus the need for change on the individual and the locality, avoiding societal accountability. In essence, they "blame the victim." Both positions impede recognition that community and neighborhood empowerment is integrally linked to national and regional domestic policies.

The disastrous decline of the quality of life in many neighborhoods and cities, and today's economic recession, clearly demonstrate the devastating effects of the absence of a progressive and accountable domestic program. Clearly, then, one means of enabling neighborhoods to become an entry point for change

The neighborhood is one of several important intervention points from which social, political, and economic change can be initiated

Community development programs should resist donor-led attempts to divert local efforts to organize and engage in nonviolent political action

is recognizing the need for community-based organizing and nonviolent political action. As Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven put it: "by definition and by necessity local. Ordinary people have always been moved to political action... where they live and work.... The skill of the organizer cannot overcome the constraints of localism; it can only discover opportunities that are buried in local institutional relationships. Whether people band together as tenants, workers, minority members, women, or environmental or peace activists, it is their neighborhoods, factories, housing projects and churches that provide the nexus for mobilization. We think it is wrong to conclude that electoral and political concentration has made local organizing futile, for local mobilizations can sometimes have powerful reverberations on national power. The problem is to identify the contextual conditions and the action strategies by which local protest can influence centralized power. In the 1930s, the industrial workers' movement won large concessions from the Roosevelt administration by the means of an unprecedented wave of locally organized industrial strikes.... The southern civil rights movement provided an example of a different kind of strategy by which local resources were mobilized for national influence."

Community development programs should resist donor-led attempts to divert local efforts to organize and engage in nonviolent political action. Progressive donors are beginning to recognize organizing as a key element in the social, political, and economic development of communities. Neighborhoods and their funders must rediscover their responsibility to engage in regional and national debates.

One of the many tragedies of the past 12 years has been our acceptance of structural and attitudinal changes that have adversely affected low-income and moderate-income communities. Liberal initiatives of the 1960s to empower low-income communities socially, economically, and politically shifted by the 1970s to a service and maintenance strategy. In the 1980s even those minimal efforts were sacrificed to laissez-faire policies that neglected those in need and concentrated wealth in the hands of a few. That decade of greed and neglect made poverty worse and intensified racism, class, and gender conflict and economic decline. The Bush administration doesn't understand the recent domestic history of our country. Many of the resources authorized for the War on Poverty were diverted to the Vietnam War. Many programs introduced at the national level were never implemented, never given a chance. We need to give them a chance and to test them in a critical way in our neighborhoods.

The need to organize locally is predicated on the need to empower people and their communities in order to build two structures:

- The internal social, political, and organizational base to address problems on the ground.
- The political base through which substantive social, political, and economic change can be achieved at all levels of government, particularly federal.

Comprehensive and integrative planning should play a central role in realizing these goals. This is a prerequisite for organizing, development, and progressive change. Any discussion about neighborhood change must recognize that planning and development require the direct participation of community residents in all facets of the process. This concept of community development not only empowers area residents but also forms, develops, and maintains community-based institutions.

Community development corporations as a vehicle for neighborhood-based change

In the early 1960s, as an outgrowth of the antipoverty movement, strong local institutions emerged to provide a base for social and community development. They gave residents of low-income communities the opportunity to participate in the planning and development process. By the mid 1960s, the concept of the community development corporation (CDC) emerged. These local institutions were to have the capacity to plan, develop, and initiate community development initiatives. They were to be responsible for building the integrative planning framework within which these development initiatives could take place. As originally contemplated by both the foundation community—led by the Ford Foundation's CDC initiative, and the federal

government in its Demonstration Cities Program—CDCs were to get specialized governmental and nongovernmental technical assistance in community planning and development. The CDCs were to link social, economic, and physical needs and programmatic responses to those needs in order to attack the problems of poverty confronting their communities comprehensively. It was understood that if they were to succeed, they would need consistent personnel, technical assistance, and funding support.

The resources to sustain those CDC efforts over the years were sporadic, and the expectations of donors and the federal government changed substantively. Except for a handful of foundations, external sources simply ceased to support the integrative planning efforts of community-based organizations.

Despite the withdrawal of government support, many local development organizations were able to carry out successful development- related efforts, but these were often responses to externally defined standards of need, accountability, and productivity rather than activities that emerged from plans that met locally determined needs and priorities. The result was greater emphasis on "reaching scale" and on increased "units produced."

Comprehensive versus categorical strategies

The reliance on quantifiable results deemphasized qualitative, or soft, projects and programs. Comprehensive strategies and plans to integrate social, physical, and economic activities were set aside. Qualitative activities, if they existed at all, focused on project, not community, planning and building. Comprehensive planning predicated on a community development process emphasizing empowerment of the disenfranchised gave way to project planning and development as an end product.

Today, there appears to be a general belief by government and many funders that poverty is inevitable. There is a growing sense that our ability to bring about positive social change is severely limited. Unfortunately, too many community-based development organizations share these dramatically lowered expectations. Neighborhood leaders and their organizations must address this problem not only by organizing but also by developing integrative neighborhood strategies that will, in turn, affect national policies.

Planning that integrates job creation, day care services, housing, commercial development, and health, education, and social support programs can and should take place at the neighborhood level. We have had some limited success in categorical areas such as housing and lending. The Community Reinvestment Act and the National Affordable Housing Act, while woefully underfunded, reflect local efforts gone national. The malignant neglect of government's responsibilities is clearest where all interventions, public and or private, eventually come to rest—the neighborhood arena. Categorical programs interact at the neighborhood level, whether intended or not, because that is where the people these programs are designed to benefit live and work. Neighborhoods must be capable of integrating programs in such a way that the cumulative impact of their efforts is greater than the parts.

Planning that integrates job creation, day care services, housing, commercial development, and health, education, and social support programs can and should take place at the neighborhood level

It would be naive to believe that any significant change can come about without significant new initiatives. These, in turn, won't even be contemplated if communities and their advocates do not organize and begin to demand them. It would also be naive to believe, given the current economy, that comprehensive community-based plans could significantly alter prospects for low-income residents. Nevertheless, as the executive panel of the Ford Foundation's Project on Social Welfare and the American Future said in 1989: A healthy economy, while essential, will not of itself generate the human investment and mutual caring that are necessary for a strong and just society. And while America has grown properly skeptical of programs that foster dependency, it has also learned that it is futile to ask people to take greater personal responsibility for their lives unless they have a real chance to escape from the material conditions that foster insecurity and despair. The deeper issue is the need to create a fairer system in which all will share both obligations and benefits.

The dilemma is that comprehensive policies for economic growth are feasible only to the extent that they are supported by workplace or neighborhood organizing efforts.

Planners must recognize that planning isn't a decision-avoidance exercise or an abstraction

Those efforts, in turn, can succeed only if neighborhoods and communities can initiate comprehensive community development efforts in which organizing, planning, and development are all viewed as ongoing processes. Susan Motley and I wrote that focused or targeted development does usually produce a product, and it is important to build upon those successes; that as intractable as they may appear, problems of poor communities can be solved by a strong and enduring partnership between community residents and private and public support; and, finally, that the problems are complex and multidimensional and require long-term, integrative approaches.

Comprehensive and integrative plans are neighborhood-based and address the myriad problems faced by residents, including education and training, day care, recreation, health, social services, criminal justice, transportation, housing, economic opportunity, and job creation. Before starting, planners must recognize that planning isn't a decision-avoidance exercise or an abstraction. It must be a conscious process putting in place a set of strategies and activities that enable the neighborhood and its development organizations to articulate and achieve goals and objectives. It must create a framework against which alternative strategies can be evaluated, decisions made, and actions initiated.

There is a growing trend to bring together diverse groups to discuss the development of comprehensive plans to address the myriad problems facing their communities. This process, sometimes referred to as "visioning," uses discussion or dialogue groups to talk out vital issues of concern to the community. These are often structured to jump ahead into the future to disarm those that come to the table with their own agenda. Once a vision for the future is agreed to, discussion can shift back to the present without risking domination of the dialogue by narrow interests. This is possible in part because people have learned to trust each other and because consensus has been reached on long-term goals.

Gianni Longo describes the process this way: "The goals, recommendations, and strategies developed through a vision process lead to the development of a comprehensive and agreed-upon agenda. As comprehensive strategic planning efforts, vision initiatives encompass all aspects of the life of a community, from economic development, to education, from the natural environment to the built environment, from culture and recreation to sports, from human needs to race relations, from youth to senior citizens. In a departure from traditional top-down planning, participants often reject the notion that the agenda items need to be prioritized stressing that each [item] and everyone is equally important.... Participants take ownership of the results of the vision process and lead the way in the implementation of the agenda."

The vision process shifts the emphasis from "why don't they?" to "how can we?" Longo cites successful efforts in San Antonio, Chattanooga, Kansas City, and Springfield, Massachusetts. Anecdotal data about the process suggests that it is worth exploring. Similar efforts are now under way in Europe, where the vision process is often stimulated by developing alternative scenarios. These scenarios are discussed by broadly based groups of stakeholders, with outside participants invited to expand the range of possible alternatives and to talk about other efforts to address related problems. Such a process is under way in Frankfurt, Germany, and in the planning process emerging from the unification of Berlin. Community-based entities can engage in other kinds of planning and organizing processes that can help them develop comprehensive change strategies. These processes, if carefully drafted, can become blueprints for local development and progressive micro and macro change.

The following ingredients are prerequisites to progressive social change:

- Obtaining a political mandate to undertake an agressive planning process with an agreement to respect the process.
- Agreeing on a set of goals and a common vision of what is to be accomplished.
- Establishing a community-based planning and development entity that is accountable to its constituency and is recognized by a variety of the area's stakeholders.
- Selecting and engaging in a planning process that is inclusive and participatory.
- Selecting a mode of intervention that is commensurate with the community's organizational capacity and its ability to influence decisions.

• Committing to a continuity of effort over time and demanding from public and private sources the resources for carrying out that commitment.

The best process for a particular situation depends on the level of organization and influence that the community entity has attained. Each process requires an understanding of the basic means of influence and the various modes of intervention needed to achieve change.

The three intertwined modes of influence that are commonly acknowledged are *force, inducement,* and *agreement*. Cox, Ehrlich, and others—in their book *Strategies of Community Organization*—put it this way: "Planning as an intervention technique articulates best with the inducement means of influence. Planning involves a complex of processes (which may include, as elements, action and development). Fundamentally the planner attempts to induce the system to adopt a proposed plan through a variety of techniques. Typically, the situation is one of high complexity, and the planner brings to bear significant expertise on the location and the extent of the problem, past attempts to deal with it, and the most desirable alternatives in view of current circumstances."

Mobility and choice—or gentrification and displacement

One aspect of the critical questions facing us is dealing with unintended outcomes such as gentrification, displacement, and outmigration. Jane Jacobs addresses a prerequisite question, one of primary concern to us today: whether we "are trying to make a better environment for current residents or giving people opportunities to leave or to attract different types of residents?" She writes: "Whatever city neighborhoods may be, or may not be, and whatever usefulness they may have, or may be coaxed into having, their qualities cannot work at cross-purposes to the thoroughgoing city mobility and fluidity of use, without economically weakening the city of which they are a part [or parenthetically, I would add, without limiting the opportunity available to the individual or group residing in the neighborhood]. The lack of either economic or social containment is natural and necessary to city neighborhoods simply because they are parts of cities.... But for all the innate extroversion of city neighborhoods, it fails to follow that city people can therefore get along magically without neighborhoods. Even the most urbane citizen does care about the atmosphere of the street and district where he lives, no matter how much choice he has of pursuits outside it; and the common run of city people do depend greatly on their neighborhoods for the kind of everyday lives they lead."

The strong interplay between neighborhood and the city that Jane Jacobs describes, and the mobility she alludes to, is an important concept to understand and foster. When we talk of "community as an entry point for change," we mean the structural and societal change discussed earlier, as well as the impact of those macro structural changes, combined with the micro activities we undertake, on the quality of life and the day-to-day realities facing area residents.

The strong interplay between neighborhood and the city that Jane Jacobs describes, and the mobility she alludes to, is an important concept to understand and foster

One major objective of progressive change, and inherent to it, is the maximization of individual and collective "choice." The right to live in a particular neighborhood and the right to move out of a neighborhood—the concept of outward mobility—should be fostered. At the same time, it is critically important to develop policies that foster upward mobility—the ability of a person or family to grow socially, economically, or culturally. This means that one needs social, economic, and cultural opportunities to be able to choose (and not be coerced) into moving in or out of a community. If I desire to move to a particular area, and if that area doesn't have affordable housing available, my choice is limited. If I am reluctant to move to a neighborhood because the educational system is not well regarded or the streets are unsafe, my choice is limited. If I am forced to move out of my neighborhood for any reason, be it economic, social, cultural, or because my opportunities are proscribed, my choice is limited.

Two interrelated goals of neighborhood change begin to emerge. The first is to enhance people's ability to exercise choice by providing the opportunity structures that enable them to stay or to leave. The second is to enhance people's ability to choose by eliminating obstacles—crime, poor schools, dirty streets, lack of decent and affordable hous-

Development and investment decisions have, historically, led to displacement and gentrification

ing—that deter people from moving into the area or upwardly mobile residents from remaining. These two goals can be achieved by closely linking economic and social investment strategies.

Enhancing opportunities for existing residents and improving the quality of life sets the stage in a way that the community becomes desirable to others. This becomes a problem if the first goal of establishing opportunity structures for the present population is not attained. Public policies are usually driven by market forces and market opportunities rather than by public benefit or social concerns. Development and investment decisions have, historically, led to displacement and gentrification. The way to counter this trend is to make sure that public policy is driven by publicly accountable structures rather than private entities.

Public benefit policies, not market opportunities, should drive policy and program decisions. The alternative—to discourage investment and community revitalization in order to avoid gentrification and displacement—is short-sighted and self-defeating. The idea of creating second-rate communities to protect them from gentrification and displacement may sound absurd, but the fear that permeates many communities has resulted in adopting those kinds of planning and development policies. In any other context, these policies would face enormous opposition.

We don't have to search the literature or leave our cities to find examples of recent development activities that reinforce patterns of social and economic segregation and restrict choice. This is often the result of poor quality and regressive development activities purportedly designed to benefit low-income residents.

Compare these efforts with similar-cost development activities in other parts of the region with exclusionary practices, and this emerging pattern of separate and unequal development becomes clearer. The key is to combine social and human investment with more equitable physical development and investment strategies such as linkage and inclusionary zoning requirements. When communities avoid investing in the quality of life for area residents for fear that others may benefit, they often accelerate decline and cause large-scale displacement and disinvestment.

Balanced development is needed if choice and enhanced opportunities for upward or outward mobility for neighborhood and low- and moderate-income residents are to be achieved. The strategy for retaining leadership and upwardly mobile people within the community so that they don't become outwardly mobile should not be based on restricting choices, but on expanding choices. Making the neighborhood desirable and attractive to them does that. One way to achieve desirable communities is community economic development. It addresses the economic needs of a community and focuses on building opportunity structures that are the foundation for a viable and desirable place to live.

Community change and community economic development

Successful community development requires comprehensive and holistic interventions that recognize a range of community needs—social, economic, physical, cultural, spiritual, political—as well as opportunities for personal, group, and community growth. Neal Pierce and Carol Steinbach point out that: "Being poor does not just affect individuals but is a systemic disease that afflicts whole communities. Deteriorated housing, impaired health, nonexistent or low wages, the welfare assault on self-respect, high crime rates, low tax rates and reduced police and school services, child neglect and wife abuse, and always the continuing export of human and financial capital—all of these feed on each other.... [We need] a community-based and comprehensive approach to improving the local economy rather than trying desperately to rebuild each individual so she and he can leave the impoverished conditions behind."

This concept of community economic development stresses the role of the community. Its success is measured in benefits accruing to the community as a whole rather than to any individual, set of individuals, or sector. It builds on positive contributions of community development corporation initiatives over the past 30 years and on significant programs that grew out of the antipoverty and Great Society initiatives, such as education and training, health care, day care and Head Start, criminal justice alternatives, low-cost housing, job cre-

ation, and small business development. These initiatives launched many successful demonstration projects.

In 1965 the first two CDCs were established in Bedford-Stuyvesant and in Cleveland. More than 2,000 CDCs actively function throughout the United States today. While many people benefited from them, the programs were never funded at the levels promised, they never approached the level of need, and they were not sustained over time. Nevertheless, these efforts have played a key role in developing progressive community leaders and government officials.

Community economic development, as originally conceived and practiced by CDCs, is neither Marxist nor capitalist in ideology. It relies on participatory and democratic processes that bring benefits to the community as a whole. It can, and often does, embrace both public and private initiatives and reward both collective and individual efforts. This underlying philosophy and the resultant integrative approach are often not consciously understood by planners, donors, grants officers, and government officials who want to prioritize and who view things programmatically and categorically. But they are embraced by neighborhood residents who experience the cumulative impact of these sectoral phenomena. Indeed, it is at the neighborhood level that one feels the impact of these phenomena and senses the potential for developing and delivering integrative approaches to achieve community development objectives.

The success of community economic development in eliminating or substantively reducing poverty is to a great extent dependent on macro socioeconomic and political forces. Federal funding cutbacks over the past 12 years resulted in a substantial increase in the level of poverty in the United States. Some argue that this signals the failure of community economic development and the CDC movement; others, including me, argue that community economic development and CDC activities are not widespread enough to have an impact on the problem, and that where they are in place, they have kept the situation from becoming considerably worse.

Despite their limited reach and the drastic cutback in federal support, these programs have had a significant impact. In Boston more than 80 percent of the city's low-cost housing production over the past five years is CDC-sponsored and built. The same is true in New York City, Chicago, St. Louis, Denver, Miami, and Cleveland. Over a five-year period, CDCs have developed almost 17 million square feet of commercial and industrial space and helped launch more than 2,000 enterprises. They generated close to 90,000 jobs between 1985 and 1990.

All this was achieved despite the fact that the Reagan-Bush administrations dramatically slashed support for infrastructure investment, education and training, job creation, small business development, and housing. These cuts have not only deprived us of necessary services and undermined the fragile fabric of our neighborhoods and the families who live there. They have sharpened divisions in our society and generated class, gender, ethnic, and racial conflict. We need community-based development entities where none now exist. We need to reinvigorate existing community-based institutions and help them focus on the need for social, economic, and physical change. We need for groups to clarify their goals and initiate a participatory planning process that first focuses on community needs and second leads to comprehensive and integrative planning initiatives that transcend narrowly defined categorical initiatives.

These cuts have not only deprived us of necessary services and undermined the fragile fabric of our neighborhoods and the families who live there. They have sharpened divisions in our society and generated class, gender, ethnic, and racial conflict

This doesn't mean that these entities or any one organization, for that matter, should be responsible for the implementation of every aspect of the plans that evolve. It does mean that a framework for synergistic activities must be developed, and that each organization engaged in the delivery of services and development should understand its role in the social, physical, and economic development of their community. It means that the assets of a community will be identified and the gaps in services highlighted.

The process should focus on the needs:

- To undertake community planning (not to be confused with an organization's need to undertake its own internal strategic planning process),
- To organize internally and externally to bring about change,
- To identify internal and external strengths and weaknesses,
- To coordinate existing activities whenever

Change—improving the quality of life for all our citizens—can be sustained only if we are ready to organize from the neighborhood level up

and wherever possible, recognizing that there will be differences among many of the organizations and a need by some to retain their autonomy,

- To integrate strategies and program initiatives to maximize potential outcomes,
- To establish systems of evaluation and feedback, particularly those that reinforce positive outcomes and relationships, and to rethink those activities that do not work,
- To understand the interdependence between local initiatives and the macro-political environment, and to try to engage on both the micro and macro level.

The people in this room are testimony to the fact that if issues are put back on the table, and if resources are put in place, we can abate those conflicts. Your efforts demonstrate that by coming together and abandoning parochial and sectoral attitudes, we have the capacity to plan, initiate, and bring about change in the way that people live. However, as I have said repeatedly today, change—improving the quality of life for all our citizens—can be sustained only if we are ready to organize from the neighborhood level up to bring about the structural social and economic changes we need to create a more equitable and caring society.

In conclusion, I'd like to quote a passage from Mamphela Ramphele and Francis Wilson's book, *Uprooting Poverty*. They wrote: "We distinguish...between short-run, or immediate, and long-run action: between what can usefully be done now and what will need to be done, after the political transition, in a more democratic society: the former primarily by independent nongovernmental organisations, the latter primarily by the state. Our argument is that much work can be done now in the present political circumstances, which can also be complementary in important ways to the process of political change itself."

They were referring to poverty in South Africa. The painful truth is that their words apply to the political and economic situation in this country as well.

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PAPER 2

The implications of an asset orientation for urban change strategies

Blandina Cardenas Ramirez

The broad outlines for this discussion—conceptualized before Los Angeles—have almost faded from consciousness in the light of the events that began Wednesday evening, April 29, 1992. As a member of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, an educator, a child and family development advocate, feminist, quasi-politician, and believer in the promise of our democracy, I reel at the continued injustice that has inflamed people to destroy each other and their environment. And I am terrified by the feeling of impotence visited on me when I listen to the inept responses of elected officials. The magnitude and complexity of the urban change challenge that faces the nation appear to be hardly understood, much less appreciated by the privileged individuals who take control of what they believe to be the instrumentalities for "rebuilding." There is no connectedness between those who proselytize on the causes or solutions for the tragedies of inner-city life and the kaleidoscope of people who occupy the world of "savage inequality." At times it seems that we have lost the capacity to see each other, much less to feel each other's condition. For me to speak analytically without giving voice to the passion is impossible.

The question we address today—about the implications of an "asset" orientation for urban change strategies—is not new. For years, most of the human development entrepreneurs with whom I have worked have spoken of "strengths" as well as "needs." The problem has always been that "strengths" have never sold or have not been heard. In the media, in policymaking, in grantmaking, in program development, in scholarly work, the emphasis has always been on painting the bleakest picture possible to justify a response. Moreover, deeply held biases about the populations of interest have often been just below the surface, and these biases have prevailed over attempts to paint impoverished communities as reservoirs of human potential. Oversimplified quantitative evaluations of early efforts to address issues of urban poverty and lack of opportunity fail to capture the dynamic of individual and community empowerment that resulted from programs even as they missed the mark of their original, often exaggerated, objectives. Over time, the often paternalistic 1960s liberal perspectives on poor and minority communities gave way to the hardening of the ideological resistance to "social programs." The onus for their condition shifted to the "undeserving poor," the "affirmative action hire," the "underclass." At the level of public policy debate, the will to do nothing was based on the rationale that nothing could be done, while the myth of exaggerated benefits to the undeserving grew.

What we seem unable to develop are systems that work

The evidence is clear that successful strategies abound for improving the condition of communities and the life chances of individuals within those communities. In child and family development, in community health programs, in education programs, in economic development, and in civic and political empowerment, we have no scarcity of strategies that work. What we seem unable to develop are systems that work. At the core of our inability to develop systems that work is our inability to identify and make visible the assets in a community that are founded on the reservoir on intellectual and emotional potential that abides in individuals and in systems—and on the interrelations and interactions they develop to sustain family, life, and spirit.

How do we identify—and make visible for purposes of urban change systems—the often intangible assets in a community? How does the recognition of such assets cause us to reframe the context in which community need and family dysfunction occur? How does a context that recognizes both assets and needs cause us to rethink both our program strategies and our advocacy? How do we keep from

"romanticizing" poverty, alienation, and despair? How do we ensure that the strategies we have formulated for either program or advocacy are playing out as intended in the context of our assessment of assets and needs? How do we ensure that an asset orientation does not become a "creaming" orientation? How do we evaluate the effectiveness of what we do in this new context? How do we communicate with the larger community in "asset" terms? In short, how do we define an "asset" orientation in the context of our work and our passion?

An an asset orientation proceeds from an analysis of the human assets—individual, family, and community—that exist, to a greater or lesser degree, in every community

The asset orientation

The concept of "asset" orientation draws heavily, but not exclusively, on John McKnight's work that suggests focusing on a neighborhood's assets rather than its deficits as a basis for development and renewal. It also draws heavily on the family resource movement's principles of universality and family strengths. While McKnight's emphasis is on the physical assets of a community, I would like to focus on an asset orientation that proceeds from an analysis of the human assets—individual, family, and community—that exist, to a greater or lesser degree, in every community.

In 1981 the Civil Rights Commission held two hearings that have been among the most instructive to my understanding of some of the dynamics in our inner cities and the lack of connection between those dynamics and the policies of government. The first was a hearing in Miami shortly after the violent unrest in some of the black inner-city neighborhoods. The situation, as I saw it, was grievous. An influx of a large Latino population—many with the professional, technical, and entrepreneurial skills to succeed not only on an individual level but also to create community assets such as media, financial, and educational institutions—had transformed Miami. Frankly, African Americans had largely been left out of the transformation. African Americans in Miami were isolated, alienated, depressed, and ultimately enraged by conditions that were getting worse instead of better.

While much of Miami's real power structure remained outside minority hands, Latinos were visible, hopeful, and successful. A few African Americans held high positions in government and education, but many of these had been imported in an early era of affirmative-action consciousness. They appeared to have few direct links to the inner-city African American community. That community appeared to be suffering from a considerable drain of persons with talent and credentials, many of whom chose to live in Atlanta or other southern cities where the prospect of a critical mass of African Americans slowly reversing historical powerlessness provided a more enticing arena in which to seek upward mobility. While I have since become aware of a larger committed pool of African American leadership in Miami, the 1981 hearing did not bring to the surface a critical mass of African American community leadership.

The Latino community in Miami had far less money than was popularly believed, but it used the money it had, and the *perception* that it had money, very well. Even today, the median income for Latinos in Miami is $10,000 below that of the population at large.

Moreover, Latinos had or created many more important "assets" for community viability than did African Americans. The Latino community in 1980 could use several television stations, numerous Spanish-language radio stations and "periodiquitos" as well as *El Nuevo Herald* to advertise services, second jobs, and political campaigns. But the African American community had ownership of almost no mediums of communications. And what was found in the English-speaking media had little connection to the needs or realities of the African American community. The Latino community was highly organized in social and mutual assistance clubs based on the province or city of origin in Cuba or Latin America. These clubs—along with corner beauty shops, coffee stands, and eateries where one could find good conversation, support, and services at unbelievably low prices—provided an infrastructure for the workings of networks for business, education, and community life. These places are where people are affirmed and information is shared. Moreover, at the time of the first two waves of Cuban immigration, the asset of familiarity was preserved—as businesses that had existed in Cuba relocated with the same name and often the same staff and merchandise. Although few of these businesses had start-up

capital, they did have ready markets for their products and services.

The family structure among the Latino population followed very traditional, extended family patterns. Although Miami Latinos tend to mirror the U.S. pattern in the number of births per family, the evidence of kinship-based multigenerational family support systems is everywhere. The beauty, the humor, and the power of these large kinship systems—*tios* and *tias, abuelos, primos, comadres* and *compadres, novias* and *arrimados*—are beginning to surface as the subject of fiction by Latino writers. But they are far from fictitious. You can see them in most Latino barrios, moving en masse through airports, hospitals, and especially picnic sites.

Perhaps the most important asset in the Latino community—and lacking in the African American community—was evidence of institutionalized cultural affirmation, a configuration of public events and rituals that provided the context for validating the community and its strengths. Many other factors come into play, of course. Miami's Latinos as a group are Caucasian, but prejudice and bigotry have hardly been absent from their South Florida experience. Miami's Latinos may feel oppressed, but they tend to view their oppressors as offshore. What is clear to me now, after some years of strongly held misperceptions, is that the success of Miami's Latino community depends much more on the community assets created or recreated here, albeit in a hospitable environment, than on the concrete assets brought here at the time of immigration.

Ten years after the end of those hearings, I cannot recall that in five days of hearings I heard about any assets in the inner-city African American community. I do not suggest that they were not there but no one made them visible and no one had integrated them into their understanding of the context in which the violence occurred. I remember only one very young community activist who seemed to have any hope that things could change. The needs statements were clear and well-rehearsed. The rationalizations from those with economic or political power were almost rhythmic in their glibness.

The second hearing looked at the economic development successes in Baltimore, and the participation of Baltimore's minority population in that process. Millions of dollars intended by federal policy to rebuild inner cities had been used to rebuild the Baltimore harbor area. The city's rebirth was a marvelous success, one I regularly enjoy, but the participation of minorities in that redevelopment was minuscule. Even though it was obvious that there had existed in Baltimore a significant infrastructure of black community assets, it was also clear that these assets were largely ignored in the redevelopment of the downtown and the harbor area.

At the core of this effort was money, very big money, very big public money. I saw clearly in the Baltimore hearings a pattern I have since seen repeated in a number of cities, even those where minorities ostensibly hold power. When these big redevelopment efforts begin, a tight circle of financial players present themselves as the only ones with the "assets" to leverage the far greater "public" assets—despite the fact that there may be assets in minority and disadvantaged communities that when leveraged to the same degree could participate in significant ways. I am concerned about this because we are now talking about possible reinvestment strategies for cities. It becomes very important to have a good understanding of inner-city assets or they will be ignored once again.

The evidence of kinship-based multigenerational family support systems is everywhere

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not presenting the Miami Latino community as a model. Each community is a product of its history, and for most historical minority groups in this country, including my own Mexican American community in South Texas, the environment for developing community assets has been hostile. But the lessons of asset-filled communities are also part of our history and, in many cases, our present. You can see the assets when you walk down Auburn Avenue in Atlanta or on Columbia Road in Washington, D.C. They are the assets embodied in African American churches and in historically black colleges and universities. They are the assets that held East Los Angeles together even as South Central Los Angeles was decimated. When I was a child, every border town from San Diego, California, to Corpus Christi, Texas, had a Spanish-language newspaper, a Spanish-language movie house, a Camara de Comercio Mexicana,

social clubs and church clubs. What we did not have access to were libraries or other institutions that could chronicle the history of and the ethic around those community assets. These were largely lost in the absence of institutional reinforcement. The presence of culturally appropriate mirrors of a community ensures that children understand they are part of a historical continuum. This gives them a sense of hope and trust in their own initiative.

Can we learn to see our assets and leverage them in ways that do not dismiss needs but play on strengths? Does it make sense to do so? Are there examples of an asset orientation working where a deficit model has failed? I will speak from my own perspective as an educator.

An asset orientation must function on at least four levels: the individual, the family, the immediate community, and the larger community

The educational system: An example

An asset orientation must function on at least four levels: the individual, the family, the immediate community, and the larger community. An asset orientation defines the level of our expectations, our effort, and the character or our encouragement. Recent innovations in education provide a powerful example of the shift from a deficit orientation to an asset orientation.

Since World War II, this nation's educational system has operated, even though it should know better, on the assumption that "ability equals achievement." This belief is reinforced and justified many times over in most educational systems by the use of various and sundry tests that serve to explain that the educational system fails to educate certain predictable groups of children because they lack the essentials for achievement and ability. Moreover, since ability has been proven to correlate with the assets, genetic or environmental, one has at the time of birth, there is little to be done but to keep the system going—and to keep administering the tests that tell us that there is little to be done. The response has been a massive investment in efforts to remediate deficits in the student rather than deficits in the approach to education.

Recent notable successes in the education of disadvantaged and minority youth led me to examine the work of Treissman, Escalante, Comer, Collins, Xavier University, and numerous others—as well as the phenomenon of the high-achieving recent Asian immigrant population. High expectations, strong preparation, and a support system sensitive to the cultural, familial, and socioeconomic circumstances of the population appear to characterize every successful effort to improve the achievement of low-achieving groups in society. These are not deficit or remedial approaches. At the core of these efforts is a tenacious teaching that assumes that minority students can do more, not less, that the curriculum must be enriching rather than compensatory, and that the context of teaching and learning must affirm the students' sense of self, build on cultural strengths, and respond to socioeconomic needs.

Those efforts have not romanticized the minority and disadvantaged they serve. They have not minimized the gaps in preparation that characterize the education of many minority students. They do not even dismiss the power of tests in marking students for educational treatment. What they do is begin with the belief that students have the ability to learn what they are taught when they are taught well. "Belief" is an asset that must exist in the students as well as the teachers. Indeed, it is central to the functioning of any human development activity. It is the fuel that mobilizes the assets in the individual and in the community.

The formula for success in this asset-oriented educational approach changes to "expectations plus effort or strong preparation plus encouragement well grounded in a support system sensitive to culture and basic needs equals achievement."

In this formulation, high expectations do not equal tougher tests. They mean the assumption—reinforced by gesture, language, and teaching style—that the student will put forth the level of effort necessary to succeed. Effort implies strong preparation by the teacher as well as the students. It is demanding, unrelenting, exciting, and fun. Encouragement involves the articulation of shared dreams and the exploration of endless possibilities. Cultural sensitivity is embedded in substance and process. It is more than having an Aztec calendar on the wall. It is being sensitive to culturally specific ways of welcoming, affirming, communicating, nurturing, and problem solving—and to values and traditions that frame the individual's concept of self. It means respond-

ing to basic conditions of students and their vulnerabilities in the context of poverty and isolation.

Early and sustained outreach to students has proven essential to increasing the success of minorities and disadvantaged students in higher education. These efforts assume that the student has the "asset" represented by ability early on—and provide the educational and personal development experiences that will ensure that the student is not tracked into early failure. The Mother-Daughter Program at the University of Arizona, started several years ago by a group of Hispanic women, now serves more than 500 mother-daughter pairs. In this effort, not only are the students seen from an asset perspective, their mothers are seen as a key asset. The program has markedly increased the college enrollment of these students and of many of their mothers.

In Louisiana, a man by the name of Taylor has developed a program similar to the Eugene Lang Program, which guarantees minority and disadvantaged students that they will be supported in college if they do well. I recently had the pleasure of meeting the woman who runs that program in New Orleans. She is the most demanding, no-nonsense, loving, supportive, no-excuses woman I have ever met. She plays to the assets, she knows the needs are there and she'll beg, borrow, or steal to find some way to meet them. But she never lets on to her Taylor Scholars that she is doing it, and she never accepts an excuse for their failure to meet her high standards in academics, personal behavior, personal appearance, or ethics. She has taken an asset orientation. She has a very clear understanding of the strengths and the enormous needs of the students with whom she works, but she emphasizes the assets to her students and the wider community.

Program development for urban change requires the acquisition of information that is accurate, relevant, and timely for decisionmaking. An asset orientation in program development is best understood if one understands program development, management, improvement, and evaluation as a process of gathering, making judgments about, and using information to make decisions (big and small) about what and how the program will do its work.

An inventory of assets: Individual, family, and community

Using an asset orientation in tandem with our understanding of the extreme need in most of our inner cities is required to give us accurate, relevant, and timely information about the context in which urban change strategies will operate. In the acquisition of context information (as opposed to merely needs assessment), the methodology recommended by McKnight is helpful. McKnight suggests that it is appropriate to conduct an asset inventory of a community. In our multicultural urban centers such an asset inventory must be approached in a culturally congruent manner. In this context culture must be examined not in the sense of formal or superficial culture, but in the sense of deep culture. How is it that the people in this community sustain their humanity? It may be useful to inventory assets and frame responses to potential from three perspectives: individual, family, and the immediate community. This is at the core of what is real. We tend to lose sight of the reality that there are assets in individuals, families, and communities.

We tend to lose sight of the reality that there are assets in individuals, families, and communities

Individual

It is essential to engage in an analysis of the asset represented by individuals in a community. In my experience working with disadvantaged populations all over this country for more than 25 years, I never fail to be amazed and inspired by the potential in individuals even in the most desperate circumstances. I remember in particular the Head Start mother who met me in an embarrassingly luxurious Los Angeles hotel suite to advocate the program. She was alive, strong, articulate, charming, and funny, but she told me that Head Start had saved her from suicide.

Her son had not attended Head Start at age three because she was too depressed to engage in the registration process. Abandoned by her son's father, she spent most of her day in bed, getting up only to eat and feed her children. A social worker intervened and succeeded in convincing her to allow the child to attend the program. With her son absent she slept even more. One day she went to the Head Start center to give her son some missed

There exists in poor and inner-city communities the same spectrum of intelligence, talents, character, wisdom, and stamina as exists anywhere in the our society

medication. She was so welcomed and the place was so inviting that slowly she began to visit more frequently. Over time she became an active, involved parent. She had since earned her GED and was enrolled in junior college. At the time I met her she was a candidate for a national office in the Head Start Parents' Association. This story stays with me all the time because she was isolated from support. But simply coming out of isolation and becoming involved in kinship groups and support systems released her potential.

The stories are endless. The ex-drug addict who taught me about the disease, the artist in jail, the alcoholic master carpenter, the soprano in the laundry, the foster grandfather who taught master's degree teachers how to work with autistic children, the migrant farmworker family who at last count had produced three slide-rule champions. I am convinced that there exists in poor and inner-city communities the same spectrum of intelligence, talents, character, wisdom, and stamina as exists anywhere in the our society. What is missing is the opportunity, the exposure, the support, the wherewithall, the models, the expectation of possibilities. As professionals who presume to intervene in the lives of individuals, we would do no harm to systematically inventory these assets. If we can see these assets, it then becomes necessary to frame programmatic responses with those assets in mind. We must be prepared to ask the questions, "What does the program need in order to tap those assets? What is the sensitivity to culture, language, economic circumstances, and conditions of daily survival that must exist or be developed in order to have the capacity to tap the assets of individuals?"

Family

Analyzing the community assets represented by families in all their diversity and tailoring programmatic responses to those assets can be among the most fruitful by-products of an asset orientation. When we will look at families we have the responsibility to be keenly sensitive to cultural characteristics and differences. I think that the lesson of the 1960s is that a lot of people who were seen as devoid of assets and with little potential were given a chance to be creative, responsible, innovative, to show what they can do—and some of those people made incredible contributions to our society. I think an asset orientation that looks at people in these communities with new eyes, and engages them in person-to-person partnerships for the creation of new goals and opportunities is essential.

Immediate community

The human infrastructure that makes up many inner-city communities has been developed over time to respond to the harsh realities of inner-city life. In this respect, such an infrastructure may have more organizational assets than those found in more affluent neighborhoods where individual family units tend to be much more self-contained.

What are some of the ways to inventory those organizational assets and develop programmatic responses that address needs by maximizing assets? Clearly, the community has a system for communicating the basic information needed for survival. The system may include media outlets such as radio and print media, bulletin boards, church bulletins, retail outlets, as well as informal networks formed at laundromats, human service agencies, and other sites. The community makes decisions about the rituals, events, and emergencies that will bring them together for a common purpose. An inventory should ask what are the institutional settings in which this coming together occurs and who are the key individuals who effect this coming together?

On a deeper level, it is necessary to understand the motivation and ethics that influence daily life in a community. I would not presume to work in the Latino Washington, D.C., metropolitan area without knowing something about Central American politics. Indeed if you listen to Spanish radio in Washington, D.C., what you learn is that the community extends from Woodbridge, Virginia, to Bladensburg, Maryland. You would know that the community will gather in their functional networks as family to commemorate country-of-origin holidays, for soccer games, and for culture and entertainment. The Spanish-language radio station would give you an indication of the importance of the country-of-origin because you would hear direct news broad-

casts from those countries. You would hear advertisements for immigration, customs, travel and courier services as well as other legal services. If you listen to the radio program that is a kind of "want-ads" of the air, you would hear that people are advertising housing arrangements, soliciting jobs and job improvement opportunities, and a range of support services. You come to understand that there exists a whole network of businesses, restaurants, dance halls, food stores, and bakeries which cater to this population in ways that make sense to their survival. It is in these establishments that people learn about jobs, human services, and civic life. You begin to understand something of the tremendous development of Latino community assets that have emerged in Washington in the last decade.

An asset orientation is not a panacea for the formidable array of dysfunction among individuals, families, or communities in our urban centers—or in our suburbs. Nor will it erase the need for a clear-eyed assessment of needs. It does, however, suggest that we may have been inordinately focused on needs and have thus failed to assess the strengths in our communities. Perhaps if we could learn to see the assets, we could once again begin to trust that the solutions to our inner-city problems must be fashioned not for those communities, but with, of, and by those communities.

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The solutions to our inner-city problems must be fashioned not for those communities, but with, of, and by those communities

PAPER 3

Structuring effective community services

Audrey Rowe

States have responded to increased demands and depressed revenues by cutting basic income supports and safety-net programs

As a nation, we are awash in a sea of dramatic and telling changes in American government and policy. The era of increasing federal spending to achieve social progress has ebbed. And with this ebbing the federal government has entered a retrenchment period that began with the Reagan administration and could last well into the 21st century. This federal retrenchment has forced the engineering of new partnerships at state and local government levels to design the social welfare agenda.

The White House—in its budget message for fiscal year 1993—stated that the administration had asked the governors, state legislators, and local officials to review the administration's proposed block-grant principles and identify other program candidates that they would consider suitable for "turnover to the states."

In that same budget message, the administration encouraged states to take the lead in designing and testing programs to improve assistance programs for low-income families. This means that leadership for social welfare progress has shifted to the state and local levels, precisely where it flowered during the 1920s when states were hailed as "laboratories of democracy" (Steinbach 1986). But this shift comes at a time when states are grappling with the dual realities of shrinking resources and increased demands for services. According to a May 1991 survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures, prospective state deficits for fiscal 1992 totaled more than $30 billion. According to the National Association of State Budget Officers, many states are experiencing the worst economic pressures since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Twenty-six states were forced to cut their budgets midyear due precisely to revenue shortfalls.

States, by and large, have responded to these increased demands and depressed revenues by cutting basic income supports and safety-net programs. It is noteworthy that:

- California reduced AFDC benefits by 4.4 percent.
- Maryland reduced AFDC benefits by 7 percent.
- Michigan reduced AFDC benefits by 6 percent and eliminated all special-needs payments.
- Tennessee reduced benefits by 4.9 percent.
- Fourteen states cut their general assistance program.

Despite the severe economic constraints, these developments have also generated opportunities for new approaches to public service delivery. State and local governments are being forced to reassess their public service delivery systems' function and role. Rising labor costs, due to union contracts, and rising operational costs are increasing the costs of services. Yet citizens are rebelling when asked to support the costs of paying for these increases. Government is being blamed for failing to meet the needs of our poor children and families; poor children and families are being blamed as irresponsible and hopelessly dysfunctional. These conflicting mandates—shrinking resources and increasing demands for services—are exacerbated by the public frustration that "something" must be done, and must be done quickly!

Private funding for community initiatives has been encouraged as never before. These initiatives have arisen, in large measure, because of an acceleration of alternative funding approaches by state governments. These alternatives have included contracted services, privatizations, direct grants and vouchers, and intergovernmental agreements. Voluntary services by individuals and groups, including vast numbers of self-help programs, have also grown. All these alternatives for service delivery are useful insofar as they allow government to be responsive, efficient, and *effective* in meeting citizen needs and demands. And as state and local governments have embraced

these alternatives, they have increased their reliance on community-based organizations to provide a range of services.

States have met with varying degrees of success in this endeavor. In some states these efforts have increased accessibility, and the comprehensiveness of programs, and where applicable, affordability when fees are necessary, and requisite charges are imposed in accordance with an ability to pay. But these approaches face the considerable problems of organizational capacity to endure and thrive over substantial periods of time, as well as the organizational ability to involve community members in program development, planning, and operations. It has also been difficult for local and state governments to restructure their systems' expectations, regulatory mandates, funding cycles, and contracting procedures to respond to these alternative methods for the delivery of human services.

Structuring an appropriate response

Collaboration, coordination, and integrated services at the local level for poor families appear to be the new rallying cry of professionals working in human services. Interest in this approach is also found within city halls, statehouses, and governors' offices.

One such example of a state-sponsored initiative in Connecticut, introduced through the State Department of Education, is the coordinated Education and Training Opportunities (CETO) grant. The result of a year of cooperative planning at the state and local levels, the intent of CETO has been to implement a funding structure and planning process to enhance local decisionmaking in the delivery of education and training services to disadvantaged populations. The framework developed promotes a comprehensive planning model for the delivery of services through a regional, client-centered system. Designed to bring together similar programs and resources into one planning process, one management structure, and a common Request for Proposal, it currently includes federal funds from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker/Single Pregnant Women, Adults in Need of Training and Retraining, and Community-Based Organization funds), the Job Training Partnership Act/Education Coordination and Grants, the Adult Education Act, and state resources from the Department of Income Maintenance Job Connection for remediation.

CETO is implemented and operated through an area collaborative. The collaborative is responsible for the development and implementation of a plan for the delivery of services to target populations and for the attainment of interagency coordination. The success of the CETO initiative raises questions about effective, comprehensive service delivery strategies that move beyond cooperation.

- *Cooperative* initiatives usually improve the coordination of existing services but do not require commitment to a reallocation of resources toward mutually agreed upon community agencies. *Cooperative* ventures engage in networking and information sharing to better match needs with resources.
- *Collaborations,* by contrast, establish common goals and mutual agreement for resource allocation. *Collaborations* jointly plan, implement, and evaluate the joint effort. "A collaborative strategy is called for in localities where the need and intent is to change fundamentally the way services are designed and delivered throughout the system" (Education and Health Consortium, p. 16).

Collaboration, coordination, and integrated services at the local level for poor families appears to be the new rallying cry

Linking services to schools is a frequently discussed model of collaboration. The model of school-linked, integrated services places the school in the central position to facilitate access to a range of support services: counseling, day care, health care, and family planning. Among the longer running programs are "Cities in Schools," which has programs operating across the country. Although the model is recognized as a successful strategy, researchers have raised questions about building a governance structure that favors a single institution. They contend that multiple access points are necessary to meet the varied needs of children and their families.

Another model of collaboration is the New Futures Initiative in Savannah, Georgia. This initiative, one of four to receive a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, seeks to reduce the overlapping problems of disadvantaged youth, school failure, unemployment, and teen pregnancy through substantive changes in the design and delivery of services.

The advantage of collaborative initiatives over cooperative ventures among existing services is the possibility to restructure resource allocation, program design, and delivery of services

The New Futures Initiative model uses a 15-member public corporation empowered by state statute. It pools resources from multiple jurisdictions to enter into multiyear contracts, as well as to plan, coordinate, and evaluate the Initiative's progress. The ultimate objective is "to trigger and sustain a political process that is powerful enough not only to modify established institutions, but actually to redefine their objectives, their accountability and their interrelationships." What is critical to the initiative's success is its receipt of local as well as state administrative and financial support. It further establishes community input and "ownership" through the 15-member public corporation and institutionalizes a continuum of planning, coordination, and evaluation.

As a strategy, collaboration means more than either integration or coordination of services. The advantage of collaborative initiatives over cooperative ventures among existing services is the possibility to restructure resource allocation, program design, and delivery of services. It is collaboration, far more than coordination, that offers the possibility of real and systemic movement toward the creation of integrated community-based services.

Building on families' and communities' strengths

Beyond structure and design issues, programs that work build on the strengths of families and communities, empowering them as an integral aspect of program activity. Two of the most successful and enduring Great Society initiatives—Head Start and Community Health Centers—share these basic attributes. Both require extensive community involvement in the planning and design of services. Both require programs to maintain community-based governing boards that set policy and oversee operations. Both programs use extensive means to foster involvement by parents and families, including frequent and open meetings, convenient locations and hours, vigorous emphasis on the needs of all family members, and an overall institutional demeanor that invites families to use services.

A community-based system that governs the development and delivery of services—and provides and nurtures access to them—needs to be flexible, available, and accountable to the population it hopes to serve. It must base its work on the needs of its clientele. Therefore, such a system requires mechanisms whereby the resident can contribute to the development, planning, and delivery of necessary services. Building on community strengths has been a fundamental principle in the field of Community Development Corporations (CDC). During the past two decades, CDCs have become the principal suppliers of low-income housing in some of this country's poorest communities. However, these community-based economic initiatives do not see physical development, be it housing, commercial, or industrial development, as a single end in itself. Rather, these economic initiatives become a means to an expanded set of goals having to do with the stabilization of and improvement in the lives of the community residents.

The Mid Bronx Desperados in New York represent one such corporation concerned about the quality of life within their community. The corporation, through its community board, involves residents in setting program priorities and performance goals. All new residents are provided orientation to community programs and resources. Community residents are encouraged to share their skills and goals for themselves and their children. Programs are designed to enhance resident options toward achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Effective community-based programs know that poor families endure grim conditions and endless waits for services. These programs attempt to mitigate, if not eliminate, these conditions, and to build a family's sense of self-worth about having come through its doors. By involving and showing fundamental respect for children, families, and community members, successful programs have had a demonstrable impact on the willingness of the hardest-to-reach families to seek services independently. Programs with community involvement also build a cadre of community leaders capable of making change. In communities suffering the loss of cohesion and infrastructure, building a core group of leaders can be as vital a goal as the more immediate need to get basic services to families in need. Indeed, using service delivery to build commu-

nity leadership may be a basic condition for successful service delivery.

Engaging the stakeholder

The power and position of the participant determines whether community-based initiatives will have the necessary authority to alter the delivery of services, or to negotiate systemwide policy changes. Potential participants must come to regard the benefits of community-based initiatives as outweighing the perceived advantages of continued autonomy and independence. This shift in perception is crucial to the long-term viability of community-based initiatives.

High-level sponsorship and the visibility provided by private funders can attract broad-based participation. However, mandates of this sort do not necessarily result in stakeholder buy-in for long-term institutional changes. The New Haven Family Alliance, a Casey Foundation child welfare reform initiative, began with full gubernatorial support. However, agency partners were unable to overcome the barriers that policy differences created. This failure to overcome policy barriers meant that the alliance was not able to sustain a commitment beyond a new gubernatorial administration. The affected agencies and community partners were unable to develop a commitment toward shared vision and goals. The commitment to change did not extend into the organizational structure of each participant agency, and hence the potential for a long-term and systemic reform was lost. Tangible stakeholder "buy-in" requires a systematic overcoming of the "loss" of independence for the "gain" of community-based service collaboration.

Ensuring accountability

When community-based services for families are designed to be interdisciplinary and family-centered, judgments of effectiveness should be comprehensive and interdisciplinary in nature, rather than narrowly defined or single-agency focused. Program evaluation must encompass the recipient of the services as well as providers and funders (local, state government, foundations). Factors such as a sense of community empowerment and enthusiasm should not be overlooked. If cost-effective strategies are to be identified, they also must be based on a broad rather than a narrow view of program success. Measurements of program success and accountability are both quantitative and qualitative.

For, ultimately, it is the community use of the program service that will be its measure of success and accountability.

Using service delivery to build community leadership may be a basic condition for successful service delivery

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PAPER 4

Dealing with race and ethnicity in urban change strategies

Peter B. Edelman

Both perspectives are correct. Integration and neighborhood development are both important strategies

The "modern" history of dealing consciously with issues of race and ethnicity in urban change strategies begins in the 1960s, as I see it, although it has echoes that go back to the debate between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. In the 1950s, with *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the early 1960s, with the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides and James Meredith, the racial challenge, at least as the larger society saw it, was one of integration: a vision of equal opportunity, of integrated schools and neighborhoods and workplaces—not a melting-pot America, because we always knew that skin color doesn't melt, but at least an America where, as Dr. King said, a person would be judged by the content of his character rather than the color of his skin.

As the 1960s wore on, complicating facts appeared. The achievement of legal rights revealed the even tougher next layer of the problem: economics—the fact that you are entitled to eat at a lunch counter doesn't necessarily mean that you have the money to pay for your meal. And when the battle for equality went North, we found that many who had cheered for civil rights in the South were less enthusiastic about it closer to home. The Watts rebellion, coming less than two weeks after the historic Voting Rights Act was signed, drove home the drama and urgency of the economic agenda. And the West Side of Chicago taught Dr. King that integration was every bit as tough a sell up North as in George Wallace's Alabama. Integration was going to be hard to achieve, and economic opportunity was going to cost money.

Watts, Detroit, and Newark reminded us in ominously rapid succession that there were racially homogeneous and disproportionately poor inner cities that demanded an attention that, in a practical if not an ideological sense, would have to be monoracial in large measure. The ultimate aim might be integration for the people of the inner city as for others. But at least in the short run, change, if it was to be meaningful, would have to begin within the ghetto. Spurred initially by the community action program of the war on poverty, organizations bent on inner-city development sprouted widely.

Indeed, for some the idea of inner-city community development was an end in itself, separable from aims or aspirations of integration. Among other forces shaping this perspective was the Black Power movement, which told us that some African Americans preferred racially homogeneous solutions (although, for others, Black Power was an assertion of the terms of dignity and self-respect that should underlie moves toward integration).

So, the second half of the 1960s featured a visible tension between those who still pursued or professed a belief in integration and those who, either instrumentally or intrinsically, had fixed on a course of neighborhood and community development.

Vision of a just society: A racial and ethnic perspective

If the first question put to me is, what kind of society are we trying to build in racial and ethnic terms, my personal answer is, what we learned or should have learned from the experience of the 1960s is that both perspectives are correct. Integration and neighborhood development are both important strategies. Integration and racial and ethnic pride are both desirable values. Integration and celebration of racial and ethnic history and culture are both right. People should have real choices and not be constrained by legal discrimination or economic privation. Of course, the question remains, how do we pursue these sometimes conflicting aims simultaneously? What is the appropriate balance between them?

The premise—my premise, anyway—is that we need to be two things at once: one country in which all are citizens in the fullest

sense of the word and in which all can participate equally, and a series of diverse communities in which we are free to celebrate our own "differentness" based on history, national origin, culture, or religion.

This synthesis, helpful as it may be in resolving the tension I mentioned, still leaves major unanswered questions. Unfettered choice about many different things is a fundamental American principle, but there are times when one person's choice conflicts with another's. These conflicts are at the heart of much of the racial and ethnic politics we are experiencing in the country today. We still have not fully resolved the question of whether there are any racially or ethnically identified activities or privileges that can legitimately exclude the eligibility of others or the exercise of their freedom of movement or choice.

Each of us has a freedom of association. Who wins each contest over "associational space," to borrow a phrase from my new colleague Mari Matsuda? We can demand that you convert to Catholicism to be a Catholic, but can the black table in the lunchroom exclude white students? At what point is the assertion of one's differentness acceptable as a basis for differentiation from others, and at what point is it unacceptable? At what point does the celebration of differentness that we value become so fragmenting of our identity as Americans that we risk losing the very idea that we are one country? The Soviet Union breaks into republics. The republics may break up yet again into ethnic units. Are we so charmed or immune in America that we need have no concern about balkanization? Does the fact that we fought a great civil war over secession and stayed together mean that we can blithely ignore the question for all time?

If we are going to build a new racial and ethnic politics, we are going to have to work out accommodations that respect differences in all directions and find the points of common ground on which to build. I hope I have advanced the ball a little when I say our vision should be of a single, unified, diverse society in which diversity is a value to be respected and encouraged. That is the premise, or at least it is my premise. And while it may not need saying, I want to say explicitly that it is a premise that is not solely about blacks and whites, or even solely about race, but about unity or community in all respects and diversity in all respects.

Elaborating the vision: The role of place-specific strategies

In urban terms, the issue of unity versus diversity gets tied up with questions of place. The poor tend to live in the inner city, and they tend to be disproportionately people of color. There are of course poor people in the suburbs, and there are nonpoor people of color in the suburbs—but poverty rates are far higher in the central cities, and as I said, the poor are disproportionately people of color.

So when we talk about integration versus pursuit of legitimately monoracial or monoethnic activities in an urban context, we necessarily turn to questions of place. And of course this is where things get even more complicated. To what extent should our housing, education, and economic strategies be metropolitan, or integrative, and to what extent should they take as a given that people will live in their current neighborhood, and work and attend school in geographic proximity to where they live?

I feel fairly confident there is no unanimity about that question. It depends in part on where you live: smaller or larger city, local politics, local economics, and so on. It depends on your personal beliefs—how much you value integration yourself. It also depends on your views about practical politics and programmatic efficacy.

Let's take practical politics first. It was easier 20 years ago to call for dispersal and metropolitan solutions. The Supreme Court hadn't yet decided *Milliken* and *Arlington Heights*, which cut litigative education and housing strategies off at the metropolitan pass. Right at the moment, the suburbs seem a long way away as a matter of political as well as judicial reality. We are constrained by the times if nothing else to focus on people where they are, although that focus does little to ease our task in these times of scarce resources and ebbing societal concern about minorities and low-income people.

The programmatic efficacy issue is whether place-specific initiatives in the inner city can work. Some say too many leaders and role-models have moved out—that without them

Our vision should be of a single, unified, diverse society in which diversity is a value to be respected and encouraged

We need both place-specific or neighborhood-specific policies and broader integrative policies

it is impossible to build a successful and viable community among those who have been left behind. The preachers and the teachers and the doctors and the lawyers and the business people have left, they say, and inner-city economic and community development toward creating a stable community is as a consequence just not possible.

Therefore, these observers say, dispersal is the only solution. We have to advocate policies of employment, education, and economic development that transcend a base in a particular inner-city place, so that we can give many more people the wherewithal to get out.

I myself am agnostic about this point, for the following reason. It seems to me that if you are going to give people the wherewithal to get out of the inner city, you have to take the same steps and pursue the same policies for the inner city itself that you would take if you were going to try to create a viable community there. You have to have good schools if people are going to be employable. You have to have accessible employment so people can acquire the resources to move if they want to. You have to have good housing and effective law enforcement and decent health care and all the other aspects of a safe and secure neighborhood and community if you are to give people sufficient security to be able even to think about planning to get out. It is always possible theoretically to scatter chronic welfare recipients into publicly assisted housing throughout the metropolitan area, but the politics of that aren't too promising, at least not at the moment. Helping people acquire their own wherewithal to be mobile seems more promising. And the policies necessary to do that are in my estimation largely the same policies one would follow in an endeavor to build a viable inner-city community. Moreover, I expect many of you work in neighborhoods that are more stable and viable than those with the most severe confluence of problems, but that are nonetheless in need of renewed development strategies and improved services for families.

At the same time, I would continue to pursue broader integrative strategies. Race, as we all know, is disproportionately tied up with poverty, so we need to continue to pursue antidiscrimination efforts with maximum vigor. Employment and housing should be open everywhere—to all. People should have real options about the education of their children, and education at the postsecondary level is in any case likely to be available only outside the particular inner-city neighborhood in which a family lives.

Let me clarify something. When I talk about broader integrative strategies, I am actually talking about two different, although overlapping, ideas. One is the idea of couching remedies that speak to the broader community in a nonracial and nonethnic sense—like employment, education, health, housing, and child care. The other idea is more specifically integrative, and involves breaking down lines of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or class. Both are important.

My point is that we need both place-specific or neighborhood-specific policies and broader integrative policies. So, if my first premise is that we can and should pursue both unity and diversity as a society, my second premise is that our urban policy can and should be both place-specific and integrative—not either-or, but both.

Can we get suburban support for an urban change agenda?

Can we get the people of the suburbs to participate in a positive way in any of this? This is a very difficult question. The demographics of the electorate have changed in a way that has to be disturbing in the extreme to advocates of better policies for the inner city. So many people now live in the suburbs that people can get elected president totally without regard to the views of those who live in central cities. At least Republicans can. When the Democratic candidates for president appeared before the United States Conference of Mayors earlier this year, the only candidate who drew any sustained response for his remarks on behalf of cities and the people who live in them was Larry Agran, the former mayor of Fresno, California. And you may have noticed that he not only won no delegates in the primaries but was not invited to debate anywhere else either. There was a modest expression of commitment to cities by candidates Bill Clinton and Jerry Brown in New York, but it looked like both were noticeably pleased when that particular primary was over.

I have two suggestions to get support from the suburbs as a political matter. One is to package what one is advocating in terms broad enough to include and reach the self-interest of suburbanites. This is particularly possible because of the recession and the widespread perception that the presidents of the past 12 years have run our nation's economy into the ground.

So our ten-point economic policy program for the country might begin with ways to promote economic growth and tax fairness generally. But points five and seven, if you will, might relate to jobs and economic development for people in the inner city. Points seven and nine of an overall education program might relate to poor children. Points eight and ten on housing in general might discuss low-income housing. The point is one of packaging, not substance.

Second, and this is hardly original either, we need to get across to the people of the suburbs that America needs all its people to be productive. You have all heard the projection that more than eight of ten new workers during this decade are going to be female, people of color, or foreign-born. If we do not educate and train everyone for the labor force, we will not have the workers we need, and jobs will disappear abroad or be replaced by technology and automation at an even faster rate.

These generalizations are not instant winners. They will have some appeal to a national administration more interested than the current one in these issues, particularly if the business community will join in the appeal. But we should not kid ourselves. This is not an easy sell. Our place-specific strategies are unlikely to have campaign salience at any time, but we have at least some hope of success in pursuing them legislatively if we package them properly.

Let me restate this a little differently. I see a difference between national themes or campaign themes and appropriate policies and programs. I am suggesting that we need a new, transcendent politics wherever we can frame issues broadly for thematic or campaign purposes. Transcending race, ethnicity, and poverty, I believe we can maximize middle-class support for real agendas of change for minorities and the poor if we frame our proposals as part of larger agendas in areas of broad concern. Our pro-grammatic politics—with its place-specific strategies—would then be pursued post-electorally in arenas and forums where technical policy detail finds a readier audience.

Racism and responsibility: What should we say out loud?

How do we handle issues of race and racism in pursuing urban change strategies? I suppose that before we can talk about that we need to define more precisely the urban change we are discussing. If it is rebuilding our roads, bridges, tunnels, sewers, and water mains, I don't think there is too big a race problem in how we talk about things. On the other end of the spectrum, if we are talking only about urban poverty when we talk about urban change, we are colliding directly with people's perceptions that this is really a race problem with a slightly euphemistic name.

We can maximize middle-class support for real agendas of change for minorities and the poor if we frame our proposals as part of larger agendas in areas of broad concern

My first suggestion is along the lines of what I said above concerning the framing of the issue. Not everyone who lives in cities is poor. Not every urban person who has a housing or education or employment problem or concern is poor. So I would suggest, again, that we want to frame discussion in the broadest terms that are nonetheless credible and relevant.

Still, a lot of what we are trying to remedy is poverty, and the poor are disproportionately African American and Hispanic American.

I think it is critically important to prove to our fellow citizens that racism is alive and well—that ugly, operative, effective racism is denying people jobs and stunting lives as we sit here, as we speak. There is a tendency in the body politic to say that racism is confined to a David Duke fringe or to Willie Horton campaign appeals, but that we legislated effective and operative racism out of existence with the civil rights laws of the 1960s.

I happen to be one who thinks that some people cry race too often to mask shortfalls in their own performance or evade responsibility for their own failures. But I also know that racism is hurting other people—a far greater number, I should say—on a daily basis, and I think America tries its best to sweep that ugly fact under the rug.

Let me tell about something some of us are doing in Washington, D.C.—which proves

It is time to put discussion of racism back into our public debate

my point and which I think deserves wide publicity and circulation. Our little organization is called the Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington, and our hypothesis is that black and Hispanic young people are losing out on jobs every day solely because of their race or ethnicity. We have sent young people out as testers of this hypothesis, and we have found that it is indeed true. The young people apply for or inquire about jobs in person, by mail, or by telephone, offering simulated resumes that are carefully paired with simulated white applicants who ask about the same job at the same time. Time after time, the whites are hired or invited to the next stage in the process while the black and Hispanic young people are shunted aside. Private employment referral agencies, hotels, upscale restaurants, retail stores, and car dealers have all been tested. Companies in every category have failed the test. The situation is appalling.

I need to say parenthetically that this methodology is like one of those demonstrations in television commercials where there is a disclaimer about some stunt done with the product that says, don't try this at home. If you are interested in carrying out employment testing in your community—and I think you should be—talk to me or write or call me, and I will put you in touch with the Fair Employment Council. The methodology is complicated, but we would be glad to help you use it.

Getting back to the point, we need to do three things about the issue of race:

- Get the demographic facts about race and poverty out on the table. It is still true that the most of the poor in America are white.
- Get the facts about racism out on the table. In today's skeptical world, this requires proof.
- Get the message out to the outside world and to our constituencies that we know the difference between racism and the limitations or failures to take responsibility on the part of some individuals. This last is obviously a painful and complicated point, but I hope I do not offend anyone when I suggest that it belongs on the list.

How do we make these points in the broader community? It is not easy, of course, and I have no magic suggestions. It would help if we had more people in leadership positions who would talk about racism—and it is one of the strong points of Bill Clinton's candidacy that he has done so. Apart from that, I think it is important to document the facts about the continuing devastation that racism is causing, and I think it is equally important to find ways to say that we understand people have to take personal responsibility for themselves in appropriate measure.

It is time to put discussion of racism back into our public debate. I think I understand how hard this will be for people to do in a measured and balanced way. It is excruciatingly difficult to be persistent and patient in pressing a point that should be obvious to everyone. It is exasperating and painful to raise matters about which one feels a totally justified anger. And it is easier to contain that anger so long as it is totally repressed than if one tries to discuss it with restraint and reserve. But we must try. We must fight the racial stereotyping that is going on just below the surface and sometimes totally out in the open.

Let me be a little more specific. Most of you meet with or have a dialogue in one way or another with the civic and elected leadership of your city. That is one thing that has changed since the 1960s. They may not know how to be as helpful as they should be, or, deep down, they may not care very much, or they may not know where to find the resources to be as helpful as they would in fact like to be. But most of them now participate in task forces and committees of one kind or another that address pressing questions about education, housing, homelessness, or economic development. You can talk to them about discrimination. You know as well as I do that if you seem to overplay the race card, they will get defensive and nothing will be accomplished. But perhaps you can even get them to participate in studying what happens to black, Hispanic, and other minority young people who try to play by the American rules and still get shunted aside. Perhaps careful discussion accompanied by persuasive evidence can produce some new insight.

What is happening now in many cities, I fear, is that civic leaders think that they have tried to make an effort and that the problems are intractable. I think this is happening in school reform, the main area of business community involvement in recent times. And I am

afraid that local business leaders in some places are coming to the conclusion, probably not stated out loud, that the real problem is a stubborn underclass out there that just does not want to be helped. This is a classic case of blaming the victim, and it is partly occurring because our national leadership is so derelict. But another reason, I think, is that the business leaders really do not understand the odds that inner-city young people face. This is what we have to try to communicate better than we have.

Role models and empowerment: Two sides of the same coin

A nagging issue nearly everywhere is, where is the leadership of the racial or ethnic community in question? Insofar as we are talking about inner-city neighborhoods, the middle-class leadership has in large part moved out and is not physically present.

A key resource, underused and underinvolved in many cities, is the church, especially the black church. I am talking about both the ministers and the congregants. I am talking about role models as tutors and big brothers and big sisters for children, and I am talking about programmatic and policy leadership and advocacy involvement.

I have no doubt that the ministers get involved when there is an election going on. That is a time-honored American tradition. But what about the rest of the time? Who is speaking out about the violence that has young people killing each other in the streets? Who is organizing the message that there is another way that might pay less in the short run but will result in life going on past age nineteen? Who is organizing the effort to get a permanent, visible presence in the schools and the settlement houses and the playgrounds of successful adults who by their presence and their actions and their assistance send the message that you can do it if you try?

Everybody is busy. I know that. But I have the feeling that even people who work full-time on community development and improvement don't necessarily make themselves visible and accessible to real people and especially real children. What about it? Am I wrong?

When I started working on these issues in the 1960s, it was the fashion to say that tutoring and mentoring were bandaids and not worth the effort, and that the only thing worthwhile was the revolution or at least full-time efforts at systemic change and reform. We certainly need more people working at systemic change than we have now, but we also need to be absolutely clear that one-on-one contacts with children are vitally important. They don't change the system, but they can make all the difference for a particular child. That is not a bandaid.

I think role models and empowerment go hand in hand, although I hasten to say there are a myriad of other ways to build empowerment that are beyond the scope of my particular assignment here: tenant management of housing and moves toward ownership as well, parent participation in schools, Head Start, and child care centers, neighborhood resident involvement in economic and community development initiatives.

Business leaders really do not understand the odds that inner-city young people face

But a key component of what needs to happen is to involve the people of the same race or ethnicity who live elsewhere. It is very important to break down the isolation and help in illuminating pathways and routes to the outside world.

Building multiethnic coalitions for community change

I would begin here with what I call the Ocean Hill–Brownsville lesson. When Mayor John Lindsay decided to experiment with school decentralization and community control in New York City in 1968, a black neighborhood became the primary battleground of the experiment. Without going through even a tidbit of the tortured history of how things went wrong, it has always seemed to me that the demonstration would have had a much greater chance of success if there had been a way to keep the issue from becoming racial. The way in which things played out created a destructive racial politics, and especially an ugly black-Jewish confrontation because of the fact that so many of the teachers were Jewish.

So the Ocean Hill–Brownsville lesson is about inclusiveness. If a city is going to undertake an initiative in neighborhood development, it should see if it is possible to build a broad base of support for it by connecting it to a multiplicity of the constituencies that make up the city's electorate.

We do not do nearly enough about telling our nation of the stakes involved in all of this. The violence now raging in inner cities has lethal implications for everyone

I hasten to say this comment may not fit every situation. If the need is for an initiative to tackle highly concentrated poverty in one or more neighborhoods, it may unfortunately be the case that highly concentrated poverty exists only in African American and Hispanic American neighborhoods. There are clear historical reasons why this might be the case. And if we are talking about school-based initiatives, in many cities it is by now the fact that African American and Hispanic American children constitute nearly all of the children in the public schools. Nonetheless, we need to build as broad a base for change as possible, and the basic insight is that we need to give as many people as feasible a stake in the endeavor.

But the coalitions should not be built only across racial and ethnic lines. They need to be built across lines of class and interest as well. This goes back to what I said earlier about relating to the people of the suburbs, relating to the civic and political leadership, and relating to the successful business and professional people and clergy of one's own racial or ethnic group. It also goes back to the point I made about the need for people who work in neighborhoods to cut across professional or disciplinary lines. It has to be recognized that there are not enough hours in the day, but I wonder if one of our problems may be the narrowness of the piece of turf on which each of us works. Do the people who work on improving services to families pay attention to problems of school quality? Do the school reformers focus on the way public housing is administered? Everyone cannot be an expert in everything, but political coalitions for improvement in the way various institutions function at the neighborhood level could perhaps be usefully broader and consequently have more clout.

Conclusion

We do not do nearly enough about telling our nation of the stakes involved in all of this. If nothing else, it should be apparent that the violence now raging in inner cities has lethal implications, sometimes all too real already, for everyone. And it should be possible to make greater headway with the point that anything less than an infinite expansion of prison cells will not contain the violence—only policies to create real life chances and opportunities stand any chance of doing so. There are of course large numbers of leaders and rank-and-file people who could care less and will not be reached no matter what anyone says. But there are others, in every community, who could be enlisted with the right pitch. And perhaps the rightest pitch of all is what is going to happen to America if we let our inner-city and urban neighborhoods deteriorate for another quarter of a century as we have since the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 signaled the end to a decade of activism and national attention to these issues.

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Toward community-responsive schools

Ralph R. Smith and Michelle Fine

The task of revitalizing urban America is intertwined with what happens (or fails to happen) in that space called school—and to the central bureaucracies that contain and control schools. While diehards exist still, those who would have urban schools focus exclusively on education—narrowly defined—they are an endangered species. Fewer still are those who would deny that schools are an important part of any strategy to improve the experience and life chances of children in situations that place them at risk. But, as often is the case, consensus, while essential, is insufficient.

U.S. schools are being encouraged to do more than they have ever done before even as they are being pressured to do better than they have ever done before. These two objectives are neither identical nor inherently consistent. In an era of limited resources and social triage, doing more by attending to a broader array of student needs and doing better by improving student academic outcomes could even appear to be mutually exclusive imperatives. The challenge facing those who would have the schools do either is to realize that schools, to succeed, must do both.

Across the country, in different ways, invoking different histories and using different languages, local communities are challenging existing school systems to enable the emergence of schools that respond to the communities they purport to serve and not just to the bureaucracies they inhabit. Within these "community responsive" schools, it is thought, concerns for academic outcomes and social services could coexist with priority being accorded to each. Whether community-responsive schools in reality could deliver all that they promise in theory is a quite interesting question to be contemplated elsewhere. Here, we assume the continuing desirability of community-responsive schools and posit two approaches, both preliminary, contingent, conditional, and open to debate.

- First, community-responsive schools could be sought as a desired outcome of the school reform movement. If this is to occur, local communities will have to understand and engage the school reform movement in its different, community-specific and idiosyncratic incarnations—pressing unwelcome questions and raising unwanted issues.
- Second, community-responsive schools could be achieved by renegotiating the relationship that now exists between schools and the local communities they purport to serve. The objective of this renegotiation would be to replace the unstated but powerfully present compact of low expectations with an articulated willingness of both schools and communities to do and be held accountable for substantially more than either has committed to thus far.

Imagine two scenarios: In the first, the community latches onto an incipient school reform initiative and seeks to broaden and deepen the reform, transforming school into spaces in which different and competent agendas could flourish. In the second, the community embarks on a more circuitous course, demonstrating that it can create the external conditions essential to school success.

A third scenario, beyond the scope of this paper, acknowledges the probable limits of both reform and restructuring and offers in their stead the image of a dismantled and radically transformed central bureaucracy.

Revitalizing urban America is intertwined with what happens (or fails to happen) in that space called school

Dueling anthems

In recent years school-community collaboration has amassed an impressive chorus of support. But these are not the only voices to be heard.

The careful listener will hear the plaintive invitation to "walk a mile in my shoes" from school teachers, administrators, and staff. With this anthem, they would tell of seeing superintendents, union leaders, and rank-and-file play reluctant roles in a discourse of ventriloquism committing to "accountability," "improved student outcomes," and this or that new "re-

Many hold out hope that the school reform movement will create new possibilities for school-community collaboration

form." All the while seething, feeling put upon by an awful mixture of naiveté, demagoguery, scapegoating—all at the expense of schools and the people who work in them.

Urban public schools sit at that place where the consequences of untended problems fall. Ours is a society without a national family policy, in which race and gender lines are coincident with privilege, and where the gap between the top and bottom rungs of the economic ladder has grown into a chasm. Children have borne the brunt of these phenomena. And because schools are populated by these same children, schools are stationary targets for much of the blame.

Outside the school gates, yet another anthem rises. R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Aretha Franklin vocalized what is at issue for many parents and community leaders who care about schools. From their vantage point, in far too many cases, whether viewed as inputs or outcomes, urban schools convey an absence of regard for the children, families, and communities they serve. The graffiti-scarred walls, high ragged fences, pock-marked playgrounds, dingy classrooms all suggest a reluctant enterprise run by the uncommitted for the insignificant. All too often the personal interactions confirm and underscore this impression. The morning and afternoon convoys of arriving and departing teachers and staff emphasize that *their* community is elsewhere. This is merely their job. Without the primary serendipitous contact that comes from living in the same community, teacher-parent interactions occur in role, at predetermined times and under circumstances in which the parent is hardly ever likely to be comfortable.

These dueling anthems converge to create a cacophonous background against which to consider school-community issues. We need only ask those who fought the uncivil war over community control less than one generation ago.

Hope for new possibilities

Many hold out hope that the school reform movement will create new possibilities for school-community collaboration. Perhaps.

The question of reform loitering around many of American cities today takes remarkably different forms, with the role of parents and community perhaps the most distinguishing feature. In Chicago, for instance, reform legislation was passed in the later 1980s requiring all Chicago schools to be led by Local School Councils, constituted by six elected parents, two community members, two teachers, and the principal. The task of the council is to hire, fire, and contract with the principal for a four-year tenure and to manage the school budget. In Chicago, then, after years of labor strife and terrible academic outcomes, the decision was made by strange bedfellows—corporate and community activist groups—to consolidate efforts, struggle for state legislation, and put parents and communities at the front of "cracking the bureaucracy."

A very different tack is taken for reform in New York City. There, the most dramatic evidence of educational transformation comes from the alternative schools dotting the map with increasing frequency. Alternative schools are allowed to bend district and union policies so that teachers can be selected by school staff, and so that the schools operate with substantial authority and autonomy. Although the alternative schools in New York still suffer from inadequate school-based resources and centrally driven requirements, they nevertheless enjoy relative autonomy, stability, and authority. Within these alternative schools, parents are typically deeply involved in their children's education, but not necessarily (or even typically) in governance. That is, parents are engaged in the education of their children in conferences, report card conversations, and perhaps on-site visits, but parents are not, as a rule, engaged in the governance of these schools. In fact, the alternative schools are perhaps the best instance of "professionally driven reform" that New York has enjoyed.

A second life of reform in New York involves "community schools" supported primarily at this point by New York State Department of Education. These schools receive funds to better integrate educational services with social services at the school site—to import community and culture into the schoolhouse. An emerging evaluation of these schools finds, however, that even in sites most profoundly successful at evincing a "sense of community" in their schools, academic outcomes (as traditionally measured) are not affected. That is, one has to intentionally connect the sense of "community" with the

sense of "academics" for positive effects to flow both ways. If not, it is easy to affect one, with no obvious consequence for the other.

A third city, Philadelphia, brings yet another page of reform and the role of parents to the national picture. Under the auspices of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, comprehensive high schools have been deeply engaged in "radical restructuring"—democratic governance, interdisciplinary curriculums, small intimate learning communities called Charters, performance-based assessments, and lots of college support for students and families. Each school that has opted for school-based management, and shared decisionmaking has selected a governance council with parent-teacher ratios in inverse proportion to those in Chicago. Four parents, approximately eight teachers, and two administrators and nonteaching staff. Governance councils are supposed to make decisions by consensus, and indeed parents are on these councils as critical decisionmakers (not merely to represent the interests of their children). Tensions between parents and teachers are obvious in some sites. Relationships are fluid and delightful in others. In Philadelphia, the role of parents is to engage with educators as peers in the governance of the school, shaping the educational plan and acting as advocates for the children.

Schools nationally, then, are engaged in diverse forms of reworking their interiors at the level of relationships, roles, responsibilities, and rules. The work of reform has been dubious in some instances, especially for academic outcomes. But in Philadelphia, initial evidence suggests that if councils of teachers and parents are engaged and supported in pursuing educationally rich Charters—communities small enough to negotiate among a democracy of differences—student outcomes can indeed be enhanced. After two years of operation, course passage rates have increased across all 22 high schools, and there is compelling evidence that students enrolled in these Charters stay; attend, and achieve in excess of their demographically comparable peers who are not in Charters.

All this is to say that the governance of schooling is in the midst of rethinking, and within that work, the role of parents and community is undergoing radical revision. It is probably fair to say that across communities, parents are welcome with weak to hostile gestures from "professionals." In many urban communities, schools have been established as the fortresses from which children would be "salvaged." In these contexts, a rhetoric of school-community partnership often seems quite remote from practice.

We offer three insights:

- First, schools are deeply involved in transforming their governance and educational work. This is engaging them in internal debates about the nature of education, their relation to the community, and their "naive" beliefs about intelligence, mobility, and the role of education in reproducing or transforming the class-race structures around them.
- Second, when schools are asked to "take on another project," like teen pregnancy or AIDS counseling, or multicultural sensitivity, the fragmentation inside schools leads them to believe that these are indeed other projects, not an extension of good schooling.
- Third, when these social service or community projects are "added on" (unfortunately, Velcro is the most apt metaphor we've got), their relation to academic outcomes tends to be remote.

But there are two images of integration. In Philadelphia, now that many high-school teachers are deeply engaged with small communities of students grades 9 through 12, we have found that they are engaged not only with the students as "minds" but also as "whole children." That is, the "discipline problem" in the back of the room who used to be suspended, or sent to the disciplinarian, is now known by a group of teachers. She lives alone. He takes care of a crack-addicted mother. She doesn't have a home. He doesn't know what the teachers are talking about. The "personal" suddenly is explicitly in the room (always was, but got coded as "discipline" or "lack of motivation") and is now part of the curriculum. So, at one of our poorest schools, all students in the Connections Charter are engaged twice a week with teachers and social workers in Family Groups in which the "personal problems" of daily living are volunteered, explored critically among students and faculty as the stuff of curriculum, as knowledge produced, negotiated, and experienced by students—as the raw material for the creation of intellectual work.

The governance of schooling is in the midst of rethinking, and within that work, the role of parents and community is undergoing radical revision

To presume that the school building can (or should) do it all—simply because it is there—is naive and foolish

Family Groups have transformed how students engage with each other, and with faculty and how they negotiate the world outside school. These aren't "rap sessions" to "ventilate." Instead, the "personal" becomes intellectual material. Nor are they sessions for someone else to "fix" the students' problems. These young people know well how to negotiate their streets, peers, and communities, but they need resources, a place to reflect, images of "what else could be," and support for all their negotiations. Family Groups provide just that. Family Groups are part of the curriculum for all. They are not a pull-out program for "problem children" and not a social-work intervention alone. Instead, they are a process of community-building whereby the strengths, passions, outrage, cultures, voices, and pains of young people interrupt and transform the bureaucracies they know as schools and the adults they know as teachers.

At another high school, the Community Service Charter students are involved for credit in projects of community service in which they learn about activism, community organizing, making a difference in a world in which so little difference seems to be made for them or their kin. Teachers report that students involved in community service are transformed by the sense of responsibility they carry when they tutor younger children (evidence suggests that tutoring helps the tutor significantly more than the tutee), or when they work in hospitals where they are responsible for patients' well-being. Evidence from Uri Treisman and Elizabeth Cohn suggests that low-income youths, particularly African American and Latino, are more engaged and academically motivated when the outcomes are collective and shared than when they are individualistic and competitive. And so, community service becomes a connection to "home" as well as a way to engage young students in the collective construction of knowledge where, as a community of differences, they are experts.

These stories tell us much about the possibilities of engaging educational and community outcomes from within the same institutions. But more often, interventions that seek to provide educational change and yield community benefits unfortunately do neither or one—rarely both. These connections need to be reworked. They are not automatic. Indeed, these connections are counterhistorical and counterbureaucratic. Comprehensive high schools were designed to "save" children from "those families" to enable "those children" (or the "talented ones") to escape from "those communities." Notions of community affirmation, partnership, and strengths are indeed foreign, if not suspect, within public schools. Further, budgets, funds, and institutional hierarchies are separate and fragmented. Trying to do the work is just that—work.

We need, then, to decide. Are we envisioning schools as the site for the colocation of lots of services with no agenda for transforming education? Or are we trying to import, interrupt, and improve educational projects by injecting rich images of community, culture, families, needs, and passions into the classroom and into the curriculum? Or are we simply trying to get schools to be as good as they can be at teaching young people what it means to survive and thrive. These are very different projects for schools—calling on very different strategies and calling for very different outcomes. To presume that the school building can (or should) do it all—simply because it is there—is naive and foolish, as we have all learned.

Renegotiating the school-community compact

The uncertainty that school reform holds for generating community-responsive schools argues persuasively for considering an alternative—one that engages schools while being less dependent on the inner workings of schools themselves. One such approach is renegotiating the existing school-community compact.

Viewed unsympathetically, the existing relationship between schools and local communities could be regarded as a compact of mutually low expectations. Beyond taxes, and despite rhetoric to the contrary, schools ask and expect little from the communities in which they reside. These communities in turn bemoan poor performance, all the while expecting school systems to remain permanently failing organizations—persisting with performing, failing without consequence.

A new compact could encompass reciprocal commitments and mutually high expectations. In exchange for being able to demand

more from schools, communities would do more to enhance the likelihood of school success. Under the new compact, schools would agree to be held accountable for (1) delivering improved student academic outcomes, (2) allowing some social services to be school-based, (3) transforming the school into a community resource center, and (4) ensuring effective participation of parents and other community stakeholders in all aspects of schooling, including governance.

In return, each local community would agree to accept responsibility for the two ingredients for school success over which schools can exercise virtually no control: the assurance of school readiness, and the safety net of social services with which to surround the school.

All this is easier said than done. Even so, there is ample precedent for many of the programmatic components—especially on the school's side. All across the nation are examples of effective schools, school-based health clinics, and school-community resource centers. The much-praised Head Start Program provides a time-tested model for parent involvement.

Enough is known to articulate standards and criteria for effective parent involvement, school-linked services, and community-education resource centers. But on the community side of the ledger, there is less understanding of how best (and even whether) to make any substantial commitment at all, much less to two amorphous concepts such as "school readiness" and "a safety net of support services." These are amenable to less succinct explanation.

School readiness

"By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." Counted as the first of the nation's education goals—and touted as the most important—school readiness had enormous intuitive appeal.

True story: *In one urban school district, one of four first graders fails in first grade, one of two fails at least once before leaving elementary school, and of those who have failed more than once and are sixteen years or older upon leaving eighth grade, fewer than 10 percent complete high school. Anecdotal information offers support to the suspicion that these school-leavers are especially likely to become young parents earlier and at a faster rate than their peers, more often than not complicating their lives and further compromising the life chances of their children. The cycle continues.*

A compelling case is made for preventing early failure. There is virtually no question that children who are failed in the early grades are often casualties of that perilous trek from birth to school. They are children who enter school malnourished, with undetected, undiagnosed, and therefore untreated physical ailments, vision, and hearing impairments—with developmental delays and emotional scars of abuse and neglect. While it is true that schools and teachers must be held accountable for teaching the students they have and not just those they would like to have, it is also true that much could be done to make the task more doable and less like an impossible mission.

School readiness had enormous intuitive appeal

In naming "school readiness" as the first of the national educational goals, President Bush and the nation's governors rightly set out to emphasize high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs, parent training and support, prenatal care, preventive health care, and good nutrition. What they overlooked, however is that school-ready children need school-ready caregivers who in turn need the help of school-ready employers and communities. Thus expanded, "school readiness" presents some new challenges as well as additional avenues for mobilizing resources, interest, and support.

Safety net of social supports

The institutionalized discontinuity between home and school might work on some levels. It rarely, however, poses a serious obstacle to problems. Not unlike the proverbial lamb, these problems follow Mary, Mike, Maria, and Malik to school every day. Teachers, counselors, and school nurses deal everyday with the consequences of isolated families and stressed-out parents. Their students, patients, and clients are the victims (and sometime the perpetrators) of abuse in all its noxious forms—physical, psychological, sexual.

True story: *Barbara, a teaching supervisor, observes that a newly minted teacher is unable to*

Since the system itself is a large part of the problem, changing the system must be a major part of the solution

reach a twelve-year old girl in her class. Deciding to model effective teacher behavior, Barbara puts her arm around the girl and says, "I just want you to know that I love you. Even when I'm annoyed at you, even when you do and say not nice things, I'll still love you." The girl begins to cry. Between the sobs and amidst the tears, the girl tells Barbara of being molested when she was nine, about being called ugly for as long as she could remember, about being embarrassed by her frumpy clothes and her hair; of having to take care of two younger siblings while her mom worked a night job; of being too tired to do her homework; of being afraid to walk home after school. Barbara's heart sinks. She had reached this girl, gotten her to bare her soul, and in her own way, to ask for help — help that Barbara has no way of providing. "Beyond taking her home with me for good," Barbara would say later, "there was absolutely nothing I could do about the plight of this child. For weeks I felt as though I had betrayed her."

Barbara's story explains in part why one senses in classrooms and in schools the same detachment one observes in a hospital emergency room. It is not only that emergencies are routine in that setting. Of even greater significance is that the detachment creates the buffer that prevents the professional from becoming overwhelmed and rendered ineffective. Detachment thus becomes more than an occupational hazard. It becomes an occupational necessity. However, the result of this distancing is an estrangement between teachers and students, teachers and families, and an alienation of teachers from their work.

True story: *A senior administrator in a large urban school district assembled a workgroup to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the growing number of pregnant and parenting school-age women. After listening to descriptions of various programs, he asked the group to develop a "service trail" for a hypothetical sixteen-year-old who suspects that she is pregnant, wishes to know for certain, and decides that, if she is pregnant, she will carry her child to term and continue her high school education. He asked the group to assume that (1) she would have to find someplace to live, and (2), she was a reasonably conscientious young woman who would have to avail herself of the various programs available for her and her unborn child.*

Two weeks later, the group reported its findings: The hypothetical young woman would be eligible for public assistance, food stamps, prenatal care, and nutritional supplements. Moreover, arrangements could be made for emergency as well as long-term housing. There was one catch, however. To get these services, the young woman would have to arrange twenty-two contacts with thirteen different agencies, federal, state, and local, public as well as private, in various locations around the city. There were instances where a contact consisted primarily of standing in line to get a form which, when properly completed, qualified its bearer to stand in yet another line for an appointment or interview, which in turn could lead to the desired service. In short, the "service trail" was a virtual maze that often could be negotiated only by a forced choice between school attendance and needed services.

Few would be surprised if our hypothetical teenager left school. As a dropout, she becomes yet another statistical accusation of school failure when, in truth, the failure encompasses all the systems and, in some respects, school less so than others. What is remarkable is not that so many pregnant and parenting teens drop out of school. Given the maze they must negotiate to take care of themselves and their children, the remarkable thing is that so many remain in school

In far too many areas, schools are literally and figuratively catching the children and youth who are free-falling through the safety net of social programs established to support families. It is not enough to push for school-based or school-linked social services. There is an important and appropriate debate to be had in this regard. Whatever the merits of school-based social services, schools should not have to concede the debate simply because communities refuse otherwise to provide appropriate, accessible, affordable, and timely care for school-age children.

School personnel need to see and hear communities demanding that the other child-serving system become more family-focused, more preventive, less crisis-driven, more coordinated, and less fragmented. This "system change" effort would begin with the simple premise: Since the system itself is a large part of the problem, changing the system must be a major part of the solution. That the existing

systems for child care, primary health care, early education, and parent training and family support do not work is virtually self-evident. More troubling is the growing suspicion that these systems, as currently conceived and configured, cannot work. There is increasing evidence that these systems do not have the capacity (in terms of the structure, relationships, or organizational culture) to succeed. If this is so, communities have much to do if schools are to be supported with the services that students need.

Dismantling the bureaucracy

There is much to commend the quest for community-responsive schools. The examples mentioned in this essay are a bare fraction of the growing number of successful schools and programs. We know enough to understand that the task is neither futile nor impossible. Since we can create community-responsive schools, the real challenge might be that of defining and ensuring the conditions under which such schools are realized, nurtured, supported, and sustained. We fear that the challenge is formidable and the prognosis discouraging.

Again, we hear the voices of the parents, teachers, and others who are engaged in school reform initiatives across the country. They tell of small victories at enormous cost, of seeing things change only to remain the same, of hearing commitment only to discover ventriloquy, and of learning firsthand about bureaucratic resistance and resiliency. They despair of negotiating new understandings when they can hardly get a hearing.

Their voices and the lessons distilled from their experience suggest that committing to community-responsive schools might make it imperative to confront the scenario we reserved at the outset of this essay: imagining and then working to achieve a dismantled and radically transformed central bureaucracy. Within this scenario, school reform (with its promised school restructuring and the renegogiated school-community compact) joins a radically decentralized and debureaucratized school system—not as alternative approaches—but as essential conditions for sustainable, community-responsive schools.

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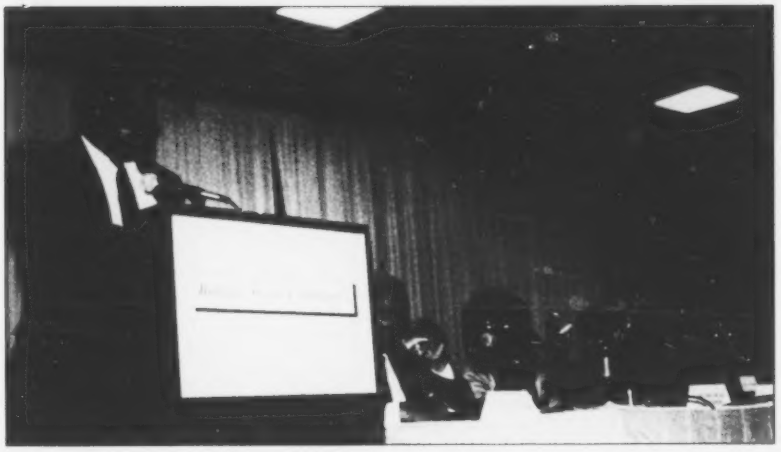

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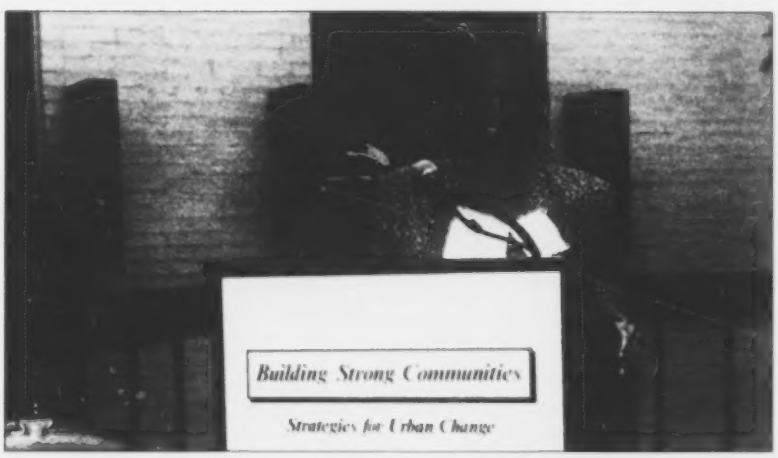

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